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The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The Chief Inspector's Report

2002-2004

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Contents

A number of qualitative terms are used throughout the report to present the findings. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of provision, the Inspectorate relates its evaluations to four performance levels which may be interpreted as follows:

GRADE		
1.	Significant strengths	good (ranging to outstanding)
2.	Strengths outweigh weaknesses	satisfactory (ranging to good)
3.	Weaknesses outweigh strengths	fair (ranging to satisfactory)
4.	Significant weaknesses	poor

1.   COMMENTARY

A time of challenge and change

1.1   My report issues at a time of very considerable public and professional debate about the future of education in Northern Ireland. Major changes are imminent, not least those arising from the Post-Primary Review and the Reviews of Further and Higher Education, all of which have significant implications for the future.

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1.2   Significant changes to the primary and post-primary curricula, to be implemented from September 2006, will present teachers, managers, governors, support services, and teacher education institutions with many challenges and opportunities. These changes will, of necessity, have to be managed and taken forward in conjunction with the day-to-day running of the schools, and the maintenance of existing commitments and standards – a considerable task, and one that will require much from staff generally, and from members of senior management in particular.

1.3   In addition, there has been much debate in Northern Ireland and elsewhere about the future structure of education at 14 to19, the status of academic and vocational qualifications, and the need to bring to all of these areas greater clarity and coherence. As this report goes to press, the Government's response to the Tomlinson proposals indicates that GCE and GSCE will be retained and strengthened, that vocational education will be developed substantially, and that the current considerable diversity within vocational qualifications will be clarified and improved through the introduction of a more coherent framework and structure.

1.4   In the further education and training sectors, there are heightened expectations, as those involved respond to the implications of the Further

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Education Review, the Essential Skills Strategy, and to economic imperatives arising from the current and future needs of Northern Ireland.

1.5   In addition, society in Northern Ireland is changing and adapting to new circumstances, and I believe that a positive and significant educational response is necessary to assist young people to adjust to life in a rapidly changing environment. The current political impasse, new economic opportunities and pressures, societal changes generally, and greater diversity within the population of Northern Ireland as a result of inward migration, are issues which affect young people and which require a considered response from the education, training and youth sectors.

1.6   As these developments take shape, the educational sector generally is beginning to experience the adverse impact of demographic decline, the consequences of which are clearly evident in relation to falling enrolments.

A time to celebrate

1.7   Faced with these challenges, and opportunities, those working in pre-school centres, schools, youth settings, colleges and training organisations will, as they have done many times before, respond positively and to the best of their

ability. I have confidence in their professionalism, and in their ability to respond in a systematic, efficient and effective manner to the issues arising, while continuing to provide pupils, young people and parents in Northern Ireland – as this report will demonstrate – with an education and training service of a high standard.

1.8   The pace of change shows no sign of slackening; the old adage, nothing is so constant as change, was never so apt. In these circumstances, I welcome the opportunity to highlight, in my report, the achievements of those who work in the education, training, and youth sectors; record what has gone well; acknowledge the improvements made, the high standards maintained; and review the better opportunities provided for young people. And also to reflect, again, on those issues which over the years have remained impervious to remedy and improvement, and to identify other important areas where we all need to do better.

1.9   The provision within education, training and youth is meeting well the general expectations of pupils and young people, their parents, and the community at large. For most, and notably for the able and the most able, that which is provided is particularly effective, and is admired and commented upon by many who live outside Northern Ireland.

success in public examinations is better than ever, and stronger than that in other regions of the United Kingdom. It is particularly important that we acknowledge and celebrate publicly the hard work and dedication of those involved

1.10   In my first Chief Inspector's Report in 2003, I noted that the education and training provision in Northern Ireland was sound; it continues to be so. The quality of our teaching force is second to none and it is a tribute to the staff, as well as to

the learners themselves, that success in public examinations is better than ever, and stronger than that in other regions of the United Kingdom. It is particularly important that we acknowledge and celebrate publicly the hard work and dedication of those involved.

1.11   In 2004, as in other years, the standards attained were particularly impressive in GCE A and AS levels, in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education, and in GCSE. Levels of achievement continue to improve. In GCSE, for example, the percentage of pupils in Northern Ireland who attain grades A* and A, and A* to C, was better than that in England and Wales. The results achieved by young people in Northern Ireland in GCE A and AS examinations were also better than those gained nationally at grades A, and at grades A to E. There were similar high levels of attainment at grades A, and A to E, in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education.

A time for change

1.12   Success in external examinations, though important, is not everything. A more demanding measure of success is the extent to which young people leave education and training confident in themselves, interested in the world about them, positive about the future, aware of and responsive to further learning opportunities, keen to contribute to society, and able to do so. I do not believe that we address issues such as these as effectively as we could. We need to move beyond thinking of education as successful insofar as it helps young people do well in examinations, and we need to explore further the potential of education to motivate young people to make a positive social, economic and environmental contribution to the communities to which they belong.

1.13   We need to do more, not least for those young people whose needs are not well served by our educational and training systems, who experience little or no success, who see little merit in a conventional school-based education, and who leave school and training ill equipped to find, or hold down, employment.

Recurring themes, concerns, and opportunities

1.14   In my previous report, I drew attention to the many strengths in education, training and youth work in Northern Ireland. I also identified the need for more attention to be given to certain key recurring themes and areas for improvement including special educational needs; catering for individual difference; information and communication technology (ICT); monitoring and evaluation; and assisting young people to respond effectively to life in Northern Ireland's still troubled society.

1.15   In the period from 2002 to 2004, evidence from inspection indicates that, whilst increased attention has been given to these matters, in the main, further work is required if the necessary improvements are to be made.

Special educational needs and catering for individual difference

1.16   Since 2002, much attention has been directed towards special educational needs. Recent evidence from inspection indicates that there is much good practice in mainstream schools in the provision made for young people with statements of special educational needs, and for those who require additional help with their learning. Progress is also being made in the further education sector in relation to adults with poor levels of competence in literacy and numeracy. It is also clear that there remain significant areas for improvement, including the need to reduce the number of young people leaving compulsory education, further education, and training with no or few qualifications, and deficient in basic skills. To achieve this, it will be important to ensure that the planning and teaching, as far as is practicable, lead to improvements in the literacy and numeracy attainments of the young people involved.

1.17   Catering effectively for individual difference continues to be one of the most demanding issues facing teachers and trainers. My colleagues report that, while there is much effective teaching in our schools, colleges and training organisations, more should be done to meet the requirements of individual learners, and to respond, more systematically, to those who need further help or challenge.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

1.18   Much has been achieved and invested since 1997 to encourage the use of ICT in our schools and colleges. Evidence from inspection suggests clearly that the quality and range of resources in classrooms have improved significantly and that ICT is highly motivational in encouraging children and young people in their learning. There is also increasing evidence of inventive and effective usage of ICT by teachers and lecturers. Despite these advances, my colleagues report that more remains to be done to develop ICT further as an integral and creative element in the day-to-day teaching and learning across the education and training sectors.

While there is some excellent practice across all sectors, and evidence of improvement, in the main, there is a continuing need for more effective monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring, self-evaluation, and institutional self-improvement

1.19   Education and training institutions are now rich in data, with substantial information about, for instance, attendance and retention rates, and performance in external and other examinations. All of this quantitative material is central to effective management, and to improving the learners' experiences and outcomes. While there is some excellent practice across all sectors, and evidence of improvement, in the main, there is a continuing need for more effective monitoring and evaluation, and for the better use of performance data to reach a more informed view of practice and standards. To be effective, such work requires a culture of openness, a willingness to seek out evidence, and an ability to be constructively self-critical. It requires also a commitment to improvement, and an interest in "making the good better, and the better best". To help realise these objectives, I believe that inspection

should continue to promote self-evaluation and self-improvement, and that inspection reports should give increased emphasis to an organisation's capacity for both.

Education in an increasingly pluralist society

1.20   There remains also the formidable challenge represented by the ongoing divisions within Northern Ireland, and by the uncomfortable issues highlighted in the recent increase in racial attacks. To enable young people to prepare better for adult and working life, and to build a better future for all in a changing Northern Ireland, I believe that those involved in education, training and the youth service should consider again how best to assist young people overcome those deep manifestations of sectarianism and racism which can make life here so problematic. I am aware of, and applaud, the excellent work associated with, for example, the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust, and the work of those schools, further education colleges, youth organisations, support services, and other providers, which has done so much to promote young people's understanding of other cultures as well as their own. I accept that the task is challenging, not least because I do not over-estimate the influence of education in a situation where so much is determined by peers, family, the media, and the streets.

Pre-school education: a good start, and a concern

1.21   My colleagues have inspected the quality of pre-school education in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, and I am pleased to report that the findings are, for the most part, very favourable. The programme to develop pre-school education has been an undoubted success. Yet the continuing enrolment of children in reception classes in primary schools suggests that the interests of adults and structures rather than the children are being put first. The evidence from inspection is quite clear. These children do not have the quality of experiences to which they are entitled; their foundation for learning is less strong than that of children in other pre-school settings. This situation is difficult to justify when the interests of children are paramount.

Higher achievement for all

1.22   In my previous report, I stated that a multi-agency approach was needed to help schools in particularly challenging circumstances to support, motivate, and retain disaffected and other young people. Schools cannot do everything on their own; they need the support of many agencies, though experience from inspection shows that a plethora of uncoordinated and poorly managed support can be more disruptive than helpful. Nonetheless, over the last two years, there is evidence to show that some schools have gained considerably from a multi-agency approach to addressing the issues associated with disadvantage.

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There are, however, parts of Northern Ireland characterised by extreme social disadvantage, related social and economic problems, low levels of attainment, and by a lack of conviction that education and training (on their own) can help young people to progress. Low and under achievement, particularly among young males, and the need to ensure that all school leavers and young people are numerate and literate, are major challenges for those involved in education and training, particularly (but not only) in these areas.

The substantial success of Northern Ireland's education and training system is evident, especially in relation to the able and most able, but I also wish to draw attention to the variability in the outcomes achieved across schools, colleges and training organisations. The gap between those achieving the highest and lowest levels of attainment is unacceptably wide, even while taking into account the circumstances occasioned by adverse social and

other environmental factors. While accepting that there are limits to what education and training can do to combat disadvantage successfully, these gaps need to be addressed through more effective management, better targeted teaching and learning, and by improved support arrangements.

schools and the pupils have gained much from the links developed with further education colleges, training organisations, and employers

Vocational and work-related education

1.23   Evidence from inspection shows that the Department of Education's key stage (KS) 4 Flexibility Programme, launched in 2000 to encourage vocational and work-related education, has done much to motivate pupils, particularly those who are unimpressed by more conventional curricular arrangements. I am especially pleased to report that the schools and the pupils have gained much from the links developed with further education colleges, training organisations, and employers. While this work requires commitment and inventiveness on all sides, support for the Programme continues to grow. Currently, 117 non-selective schools are involved, some 72% of the sector; one selective school is also involved with the Programme. Increasing numbers of selective schools are developing, or are beginning to develop, vocational programmes for sixth-form pupils, and links with further education colleges.

1.24   The response of the young people to the KS4 Flexibility Programme continues, in the main, to be highly positive. Nonetheless, there are challenges in an otherwise successful story. Some schools report that the attendance of pupils on the days when they are in college or training organisations, or on work placement, is better than when they are in school and subject to the standard timetable and ways of working. My colleagues also report that much of the school-based work for these young people remains highly conventional in nature. Furthermore, subject teachers make insufficient links

with the learning opportunities which the pupils experience when attending further education colleges, training organisations, or work placements.

A time of change for all

1.25   I am conscious also that we, as an Inspectorate, have much to do. The Inspectorate, with a history going back some 170 years, has not survived because of its capacity to stand still and resist change. We have adapted and adjusted to changing demands, contexts and expectations. It remains so today. To maintain our position, and to increase our influence and credibility, we are improving the transparency and relevance of our work, strengthening our influence on policy and strategy, working ever more constructively with other educational interests, and strengthening the link between inspection and improvement.

1.26   The Inspectorate, in addition to its key role to report to and advise Government, has a major concern to promote improvement in the interests of all learners. As Chief Inspector, I want the Inspectorate to assist young people to get the very best deal possible, so that they can develop their talents and become productive and fulfilled members of society. To achieve this, the Inspectorate seeks to promote the highest possible standards of education and training.

1.27   To realise these objectives, I have asked my colleagues to review the current models of inspection, to consult on how we might improve the process and thus strengthen the influence of inspection. A wide range of views is being sought in a variety of ways, including web-based consultation. I am also aware that the Review of Further Education, the Post-Primary Review, and the 14-19 review, all point to the need for greater coherence in young people's experiences. Recently, my colleagues have been piloting an approach to inspection centred on education and training in a particular geographical area, to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. We will be evaluating the extent to which such provision meets the needs of young people, employers, and the community. We will want to know how effective are the current strategies for 14-19 provision in raising achievement, widening access, and increasing participation in education and training.

1.28   We also need to respond to and evaluate the outcomes of Governmental and departmental priorities, including those intended to help all young people fulfil their potential, develop personal and key skills, progress towards employment, and acquire a knowledge of and respect for diversity, equality, inclusiveness and human rights.

this report provides substantial evidence to demonstrate the strengths and achievements of the education, training and youth sectors in Northern Ireland

1.29   I am especially conscious that, if our work is to have influence, we need to ensure that those in a position to make a difference in the education, youth, and training sectors, and in initial teacher education, are familiar with the strengths and areas for improvement identified by our inspection and survey programmes, and are aware of their implications for policy development and for in-service education. It is vital, if standards are to improve further, and if education and training are to carry the weight of the many expectations placed upon them, that the findings of inspection influence, significantly, future policy and in-service provision.

1.30   Inspection of itself cannot effect improvement. The Inspectorate cannot inspect improvement into an organisation but I am convinced that inspection is a powerful stimulus for improvement, particularly where institutional self-evaluation is used as an integral part of the inspection process. Ultimately, the realisation of improvement, particularly sustained improvement, depends upon the efforts of those who teach, train and work with children and young people on a daily basis, and with those who have the direct responsibility for supporting them.

1.31   A few years ago, we adjusted our inspections to give a stronger emphasis to listening to young people's experiences of education and training. Their perceptions are valuable and their views are taken seriously. For the most part, their comments are insightful, and, when they need to be, constructively critical. Indeed, my colleagues report that senior managers in the organisations we inspect would be assisted considerably in their work for institutional improvement if they drew more regularly and systematically upon the comments offered by the young people involved.

Conclusion

1.32   Irrespective of current challenges and future changes, and our ongoing duty to provide Government with advice on standards and quality in Northern Ireland's education, youth and training systems, the Inspectorate remains conscious of the importance of keeping the needs and interests of children and young people first.

1.33   I am especially pleased that this report provides substantial evidence to demonstrate the strengths and achievements of the education, training and youth sectors in Northern Ireland. It is important that these successes are recognised and celebrated. It is equally important that the areas for improvement identified in this report are addressed and remedied, not least the urgent need to improve the educational experiences of those young people who gain little from what is currently provided, and who lack appropriate qualifications and skills.

1.34   I am committed to ensuring that the Inspectorate continues to work to strengthen further its capacity to be relevant, effective, and focused on promoting improvement. To realise these goals, it will be important that the Inspectorate continues to strengthen its consistency of evaluation, maintains a firm focus on outcomes, and seeks constantly to improve further the experiences of all learners, and the standards they attain. I am also committed to improving the way in which we disseminate our findings and engage with other educational professionals, and with the wider public, to ensure that the interests of learners are paramount. For it is today's children and young people who will create our future.

Marion J Matchett.

MARION J MATCHETT
CHIEF INSPECTOR

2.   CONTEXT AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

The Role of the Inspectorate

2.1   Following the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998, the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) was retained as a unitary body to provide inspection services for, and policy and other advice to, the Department of Education (DE), the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). The Inspectorate's annual business plan is, as a result, influenced strongly by the need to support and advise on the outcome of the strategic objectives of DE, DCAL and DEL, the Public Service Agreements and Service Delivery Agreement targets of the three departments, and the targets in the Citizen's Charter.

Business Planning: what does the Inspectorate hope to achieve?

2.2   Between 2002 and 2004, the Inspectorate has continued to make progress in developing its main business objectives which centre on:

- completing successfully the planned programme of monitoring visits, inspections and surveys, and reporting on quality and standards across the education, youth and training sectors;

- developing a rigorous business planning process, in consultation with DE, DEL and DCAL;

- improving its capacity to provide policy advice to DE, DEL and DCAL, and contributing to meeting the strategic objectives of the three departments.

- developing further the professional growth of the Inspectorate so that it keeps pace with changing demands;

- ensuring that its work is effective, efficient and reflects best value principles through the development of increasingly open, transparent and productive working arrangements with others;

- working towards a greater correlation between external inspection and internal self-evaluation; disseminating more effectively the key messages from inspection; and ensuring that inspection procedures are fit for purpose;

- promoting improvement in the interests of all learners and by demonstrating more clearly the link between inspection and improvement;

- encouraging self-evaluation in the organisations inspected to improve the experiences of the learners, and the standards they attain.

Improving the Inspectorate as an organisation

2.3   Following the publication in 2002 of The Charter for Inspection, the Inspectorate published in 2003 A Common Framework for Inspection to ensure that those who are inspected are aware of what is involved, and have access to the indicators used by the Inspectorate.

2.4   The Inspectorate evaluates regularly the quality of its work by seeking feedback from those who have been inspected. As part of this process, the Inspectorate appointed independent consultants to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of inspection during the academic year 2002-2003.

2.5   The consultants' report, published in May 2003, indicated that satisfaction levels at all stages of the inspection process were high. Leaders believed that the inspection was constructive and helpful to their organisations. They highlighted the main benefits gained, such as the recognition of the organisation's strengths and the identification of areas for improvement. They reported also that the attitude of the inspectors was positive and that many staff had been reassured about the standard of their work. The report also identified areas for improvement, such as the demand placed on staff for pre-inspection information. In response, the Inspectorate has made changes to its requirements for information prior to an inspection.

2.6   The Inspectorate analyses the number and nature of the compliments and complaints it receives

to improve the standard of service which it provides. Those received from September 2002 to June 2004 include praise for the work of individual inspectors and/or inspection teams, or for the work of Inspection Services Branch (ISB); complaints about the procedures adopted by the Inspectorate or ISB before and/or during inspection; and complaints about the work of individual inspectors or inspection teams. In 2002-2003, twelve complaints were received about the work of the Inspectorate; in 2003-2004, six complaints were received. During the same period, the Inspectorate received a total of 105 written compliments about the conduct of inspections.

Review of Inspection Models

2.7   In 2003-2004, the Inspectorate reviewed its current models of inspection in the light of the guidance issued by the Office of Public Services Reform (OPSR) in London. Eight new models of inspection were developed covering the education, training and youth sectors, and including an area inspection model to evaluate the quality and standards of education and training within a particular geographical area. Pilot inspections are being carried out during 2004-2005, and new models of inspection will be introduced during 2005-2006.

Pre-School Education

3.   THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The term pre-school centre is used to describe statutory nursery schools and classes, and voluntary and private pre-school provision receiving funding from DE.

Introduction

3.1   By October 2003, the pre-school expansion programme had increased the number of funded pre-school providers from 454 in 1999-2002 to 683 including 100 nursery schools, 200 nursery classes in primary schools, and 383 voluntary/private pre-school centres; almost all of the latter comprise voluntary playgroups including some 40 Irish-medium centres. In addition, some 216 primary schools provided reception places for pre-school children.

3.2   Following a period of rapid expansion, providers now face a significant decline in the pre-school population which, if sustained, will result in an over-provision of places. Consequently, many pre-school centres face an uncertain future. Some voluntary playgroups have already closed and over 70% of statutory nurseries admit two year olds because there are insufficient applications from children in their pre-school year.

3.3   The Inspectorate continues to work to promote partnerships among the support agencies, teachers, and early years staff within the statutory and the voluntary/private pre-school sectors, and there have been some successful initiatives that have encouraged the sharing of ideas and expertise in the interests of raising standards. It is important that such partnerships are maintained through the difficult period ahead. Any reduction in the number of providers needs to be managed in a sensitive manner that places priority on the needs of the children and their families.

3.4   The pre-school expansion programme has increased the provision of good quality pre-school places but has not yet realised the wider aim of developing, as part of the Childcare Strategy, integrated early years services throughout Northern Ireland.

What are the main strengths in pre-school education?

The main strengths are:

◗   the willingness and capacity of teachers and early years staff to bring about improvements in the children's learning as reflected in the rising standards and the progress made in addressing issues arising from inspection;

◗   the ethos, including the caring relationships, the stimulating learning environment, and the children's good behaviour;

◗   the relationships with parents, and the efforts made to involve them in their children's learning;

◗   the arrangements made for child protection;

◗   the breadth of the programme; and

◗   the opportunities for language, creative, and personal, social and emotional development.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗   self-evaluation and self-improvement procedures and processes;

◗   planning and assessment, and the extent to which these meet the children's individual needs;

◗   the development of the children's learning during play;

◗   the provision for outdoor play and for the children's physical development;

◗   the opportunities for the children to explore early ideas in science and technology;

- the provision for children with special educational needs; and

- the support for special needs received from other professionals and agencies.

Figure 1: Overview of pre-school (expressed as a percentage)

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Overall effectiveness	50	38	12
Teaching	52	33	15
Standards	49	40	11
Assessment	26	48	26
Management	55	37	8
Language	60	33	7
Mathematics	51	36	13
Special Needs	37	43	20

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4
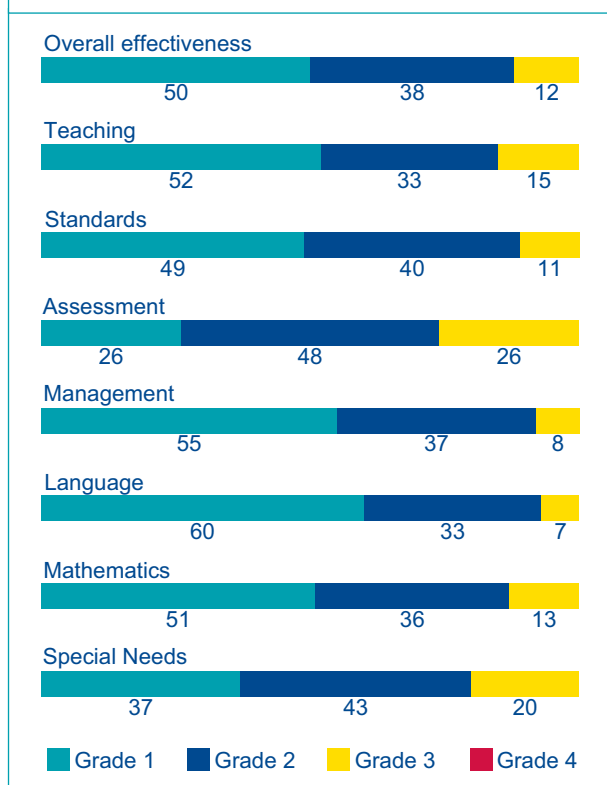
What is the overall quality of pre-school education in Northern Ireland?

3.5 Evidence from the inspection of 131 voluntary/private pre-school providers and 47 nursery schools and classes from September 2002 to June 2004 demonstrates that standards are rising in all types of pre-school provision.

How good is the ethos in pre-school centres?

3.6 There are significant strengths in the ethos of 75% of the pre-school centres. The standards of pastoral care are high with very good relationships at all levels; the children are well settled. There are appropriate policies on child protection. In 10% of the centres, improvements are needed in the strategies designed to develop the children's behaviour and social skills.

How good is the teaching and learning?

3.7 In approximately 50% of the pre-school centres, the quality of the teaching is good or very good. The staff display a high level of skill in promoting learning through play and other activities; they have a clear understanding of the opportunities for learning that can arise and are very effective in fostering the children's thinking and language skills. They promote well the children's independence and self-confidence. In 15% of the pre-school centres, there are important shortcomings in the quality of the teaching. Most frequently the staff are unclear about the learning they wish to promote, and do not interact skilfully enough with the children to build on their ideas or promote independent exploration.

What standards are achieved?

3.8 Seventy percent of the pre-school centres promote very effectively the children's personal, social and emotional development. In nearly 60%, there is good or very good development of language. The standards of creative development and the development of early mathematical ideas are good or very good in over 50% of centres. Although standards have risen since the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002, physical development and the exploration of early ideas of science and technology remain areas that are promoted less effectively.

3.9 The provision of ICT equipment within the pre-school sector is varied and its use is generally underdeveloped. There is a limited range of suitable software that offers opportunities for children to explore ideas and think creatively. Training and equipment in ICT are better in the statutory than in the voluntary/private sector.

What evidence is there of improvement?

3.10 Since 2002, the findings from inspection show that the quality of pre-school education is rising in statutory nursery and voluntary/private provision.

Figure 2: The quality of pre-school provision 2002–2004

Nursery schools 2002	43	33	24
Nursery schools 2004	53	45	2
Voluntary/private centres 2002	30	42	26	2
Voluntary/private centres 2004	50	35	14	1

Grade 1   Grade 2   Grade 3   Grade 4
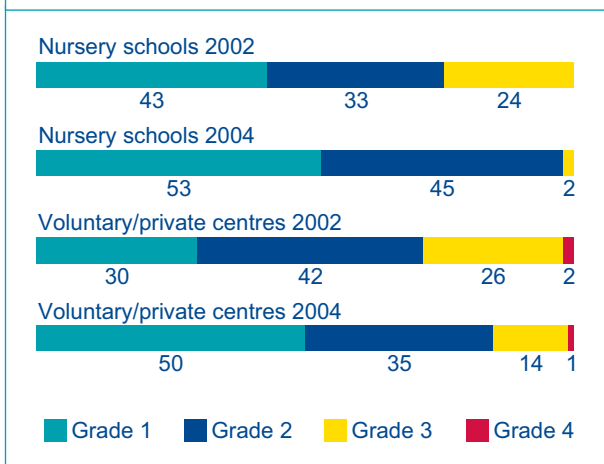
3.11   The quality of the planning for and assessment of learning shows significant improvement. In 2002, only 15% of all pre-school centres had good or very good assessment arrangements; this figure has now risen to over 25%. The planning is now of high quality in over 30% of pre-school centres; in 15% there are important shortcomings. More work is needed to raise these standards further and to ensure that assessment information is used well to guide the planning of activities to meet the children's individual needs.

3.12   In the period covered by this report, the voluntary/private sector did not receive funding from DE to improve buildings or outdoor facilities. The sector has, however, sought funding from alternative sources to create outdoor play areas and to improve the resources for physical development. In 2002, only 15% of voluntary/private centres provided good or very good opportunities for children's physical development; this figure has now risen to over 30% and there is a similar decrease in the proportion of centres where the provision displays important shortcomings. The provision for the children's physical development is better in statutory nurseries where there is good or very good provision in just under 50% of the centres. Early mathematical learning has improved in the voluntary/private sector and is now of a similarly sound standard in all types of pre-school centre.

How good are management and leadership?

3.13   The quality of management and leadership is good or very good in some 55% of pre-school centres. In the voluntary/private centres, the majority of the early years specialists, or qualified teachers who provide support, are effective in helping the staff to develop the programme and to address those areas which require improvement. The development of self-evaluation is at an early stage; some nursery schools are reviewing the quality of their provision and taking action that leads to improvement.

What is the quality of the provision made for special educational needs?

3.14   Figures from the school census carried out in October each year suggest that children with special educational needs are much more likely to be enrolled in statutory nursery provision than in voluntary/private pre-school centres.

Figure 3: The percentage of pre-school centres enrolling one or more children with special educational needs (based on census data for October 2003)

	Nursery schools	Nursery classes centres	Voluntary/ private
1 or more children with a statement of SEN	33%	18%	3%
1 or more children with SEN but without a statement	91%	60%	23%

As the census data is collected very early in the school year, many pre-school children with special needs are not identified in the returns. In 2003-2004, for example, 50% of the voluntary/private centres inspected had enrolled children who were receiving therapy or support for special educational needs from other professionals; 7% contained children with a statement of special educational needs.

3.15   Since 2002, there have been some improvements in the provision made for children with special educational needs. Over 50% of statutory nurseries make good or very good provision for

these children; in just over 5% there are important shortcomings. A few nurseries experience difficulty when, as a result of open enrolment procedures or other factors, large numbers of children with special educational needs are admitted. For example, in one nursery school with a total enrolment of 78 children, there were five children with statements of special educational need and 30 children whose difficulties placed them at stages 3 or 4 of the Code of Practice. In such circumstances, the staff come close to being overwhelmed by the range and severity of the needs of individual children. There is good provision in 30% of the voluntary/private centres; in 26%, there are important shortcomings. The key areas for improvement continue to be the poor links with, and support from, health and education professionals; the lack of training available to staff in relation to special needs; and the liaison with primary schools to which the children transfer in year 1.

3.16   In 2002, the Inspectorate drew DE's attention to shortcomings in special needs provision for pre-school children. Some progress has been made since then in identifying good practice and the action that might be taken to bring about improvement. The Pre-school Working Group on special needs and the education and library boards (ELBs) are developing an information system that will contain up-to-date data about children placed at stages 3 to 5 of the Code of Practice. In 2003-2004, DE made available to the ELBs £500,000 of additional funding to support the pre-school sector with needs arising from autism; a further £315,000 was allocated in 2004. Although there are indications of potentially valuable developments arising from these initiatives, neither initiative targets specifically the shortcomings within the voluntary/private pre-school sector identified in the Inspectorate's findings. Some support for the voluntary/private sector is available through projects funded by, for example, the European Union and the National Lottery; these initiatives are often targeted at specific areas of Northern Ireland. Other actions proposed by DE have the potential to address many of the issues raised by the Inspectorate. These actions include further bids for additional funding to address the inconsistent levels of provision for pre-school children with special needs. Progress is

slow and the totality of the funding required has not yet been secured.

3.17   The provision for special needs in pre-school education in Northern Ireland remains inconsistent, fragmentary and overly dependent on one-off funding initiatives or projects. There is not yet a coherent and appropriately funded approach to meet effectively the children's needs involving the relevant Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies. One of the main obstacles to progress continues to be the lack of a clear legislative responsibility for special educational needs support when a child's pre-school education is provided outside of a school. Whilst there is clear responsibility on the ELBs to identify children who have special needs, and to determine the provision required, there is little clarity as to who is responsible for providing support, or advice, when the children attend a voluntary or private pre-school education centre. There is an urgent need for legislative and structural changes to enable current shortcomings to be addressed effectively.

How effective is the liaison between pre-school providers and primary schools?

3.18   Nearly 70% of statutory nurseries have good links with local primary schools; under 50% of voluntary/private providers have similar links. Many voluntary/private providers complete transition records giving important information to primary schools. They often report, however, that they do not receive a positive response from primary schools when they attempt to initiate links. Good liaison between the sectors is vital and teachers of year 1 classes need to take more account of what is achieved in pre-school education to ensure that the experiences they provide, particularly in learning through play, offer the children sufficient challenge and stimulation.

Primary Education

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Introduction

3.19   During 2002-2004, the Inspectorate carried out a total of 134 inspections, including 129 focused inspections that centred on the quality and effectiveness of English (or mathematics), ICT, and pastoral care and child protection. In addition, district inspections, surveys and incidental visits were undertaken to evaluate specific aspects of provision. In almost all of the focused inspections, the overall quality of the school was satisfactory or better. A growing area of primary inspection work involves the evaluation of provision in the Irish-medium sector comprising some 30 schools; these are either fully Irish-medium or contain an Irish-medium unit.

What are the main strengths in primary education?

The main strengths are:

- ◗ the positive ethos;

- ◗ the arrangements for the pastoral care of the children;

- ◗ the general quality of teaching;

- ◗ the overall quality of learning;

- ◗ the resources used to promote the children's learning; and

- ◗ the important contribution of the ancillary staff to the work of the school.
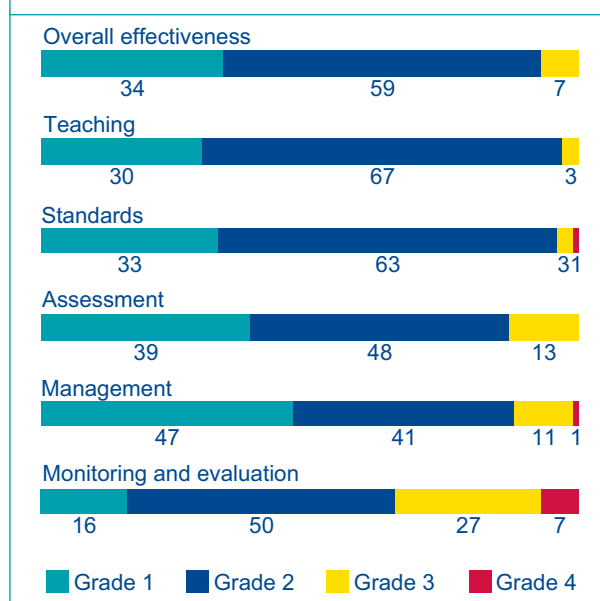
What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

- ◗ monitoring and evaluation in a significant minority of the schools;

- ◗ the provision for special education in a minority of the schools, including insufficient monitoring of the progress made by children with special educational needs, and education plans which do not focus sufficiently on those needs;

- ◗ the quality of the provision made for the children in reception classes;

- ◗ the use of assessment information to track children's progress over time;

- ◗ the assessment of children's learning through play;

- ◗ identifying and supporting the training needs of classroom assistants;

- ◗ supporting the needs of individual children;

- ◗ the insufficient integration of ICT into the wider curriculum to promote greater breadth, challenge and coherence in the children's experiences; and

- ◗ curricular links between the pre-school sector and primary schools, and between primary and post-primary schools.

Figure 4: Overview of primary schools

Category	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Overall effectiveness	34	59	7	
Teaching	30	67	3	
Standards	33	63	3	1
Assessment	39	48	13	
Management	47	41	11	1
Monitoring and evaluation	16	50	27	7

How good is the ethos in primary schools?

3.20   In almost all of the schools, the ethos has significant strengths, or has strengths that outweigh weaknesses. Features of effective provision include a strong sense of community, supportive relationships, the children's good behaviour, mutual respect, and a safe and stimulating environment for learning and teaching.

How effective are pastoral care provision and child protection arrangements?

3.21   In over two-thirds of the schools, the arrangements for pastoral care have significant strengths. In nearly all of the schools, the evidence from inspection reflects the predominately positive view of the parents that the pastoral needs of the children are met effectively. Almost all schools have in place policies and procedures that fulfil the requirements of DE Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection. Most schools are amending their policies and procedures to meet the requirements of DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils.

How good is the behaviour in primary schools?

3.22   There are significant strengths in the children's behaviour in most of the schools inspected. Where children's behaviour is challenging, many schools are supported well by the parents and outside agencies. In the best practice, the schools implement effective behaviour management strategies. In 2002-2003, 278 children were suspended from primary schools, a decrease of 23% from 2001-2002.

How good is the learning and teaching?

3.23   The evidence from inspection indicates that the children respond well to their teachers and are keen to learn; in one-third of the lessons observed, the children's responses demonstrate significant strengths, and in just under two-thirds, strengths outweigh weaknesses. Nearly all settle readily to their tasks, co-operate well with one another, work effectively, and respond well. In a small minority of the lessons, some children are disruptive, particularly when the work is of a mundane nature.

3.24   In almost all of the schools, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better; there are significant strengths in just under one-third of the lessons, and strengths outweigh weaknesses in just over two-thirds of the lessons. In the best practice, the teaching caters well for the range of abilities, resources are used effectively, and there is a suitable range of teaching approaches. The children are

aware of what they are expected to know, understand and do, and have regular opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, and to extend their thinking. In a small number of the lessons, the teaching is less effective; there is an over-emphasis on whole-class work, the pace of the teaching is too slow, and the activities lack sufficient challenge.

How good are the management and leadership?

3.25   In the best practice, the use of self-evaluative strategies brings about a good understanding of the school's performance and develops a sense of unity and purpose. Those with management responsibilities have a firm grasp of the strengths of the school and of the areas for improvement; roles and responsibilities are defined clearly; and action plans, linked to whole-school development plans, assist the staff to monitor, evaluate and sustain continuous improvement in the standards attained by the children.

3.26   In a minority of the schools, the management and leadership are ineffective and the principals have a limited understanding of the quality of the learning and teaching. Development planning is not sufficiently specific in identifying targets for improvement, and there is an absence of effective strategies to monitor and evaluate standards.

3.27   The boards of governors have increasingly become involved in decision-making and overseeing the work of the schools. During their discussions with the Inspectorate, governors raised concerns, for example, in relation to their training needs in recruiting and promoting staff, child protection, and financial management.

How effective are the school's procedures for monitoring and evaluation?

3.28   A majority of the schools have a generally satisfactory or better understanding of the strengths of their provision; in a significant minority, the staff are less effective in identifying areas for improvement and in planning for improvement. A majority have established satisfactory or better systems to monitor and evaluate the children's standards of work. In the best practice, in about one-sixth of the schools

inspected, the principals and senior management make good use of qualitative and quantitative data. The most effective schools use computer systems to evaluate quantitative and benchmarking data on, for example, attendance and the children's levels of attainment. This data is analysed to monitor the children's progress, set targets for individual children, or for whole classes, and to plan for improvement.

3.29   In a significant minority of the schools, monitoring and evaluation strategies are limited in scope and effectiveness, particularly when principals and senior management teams do not have not an effective approach to whole-school development and the improvement of standards. Typically, in these schools, test data is collected but is not used well to inform planning or to improve the provision for children of differing abilities, including the more able.

How effective are the procedures for assessment, recording and reporting?

3.30   In most schools, assessment, recording and reporting procedures collectively have significant strengths, or the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. In the best practice, the teachers use marking and monitoring to inform future teaching and learning. Most mark the children's work regularly. A minority indicate clearly how the children's work might be improved.

3.31   In general, assessment information is not used sufficiently to monitor progress over time and to inform subsequent learning and teaching. Limited attention is given to tracking the progress of individual children within and across key stages. In contrast, in a minority of the schools, the most effective assessment involves the careful monitoring of the children's attainments through the use of data from standardised tests and through self-assessment by the children.

What is the quality of provision for reception children in primary schools?

3.32   In 2004, an Inspectorate survey of the education provided for pre-school children taught in reception groups found that the standard of provision fell far short of the quality in pre-school centres.

Figure 5: The quality of provision for reception children in primary schools

| 20 | 64 | 16 |

Grade 1   Grade 2   Grade 3   Grade 4
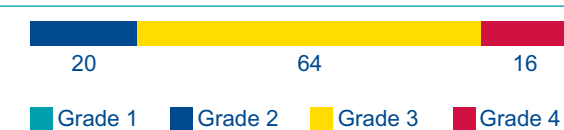
During 2003-2004, some 1514 pre-school children attended reception provision in primary schools. Nearly half of the schools providing reception places admit children who have transferred from a statutory nursery or other form of funded pre-school centre. Seventy-eight percent of the schools report that there is alternative funded pre-school provision in the vicinity of the school. Primary schools are not resourced to provide a play-based pre-school curriculum to meet the needs of these young children. The zero-rating of reception provision - that is, where the school does not receive funding for children under compulsory school age - has reduced the number of schools offering places; however, many - especially small schools - intend to continue to do so. The provision of a few reception places in a composite class containing children in years 1 and 2, or older children, represents the least favourable situation for developing pre-school education of good quality. Action is needed by DE, by those providing advice and support, and by the schools themselves, to ensure that the needs of these children are given the highest priority. Unless no other provision is possible, reception places should be phased out; if some provision must remain, it is essential that it meets appropriate standards.

How effective is structured play in primary schools?

3.33   In most of the schools, the children in the early years experience well-planned and enjoyable sessions of structured play. In the best practice, in about one-third of the lessons, the teachers, often well supported by the classroom assistants, engage well with the children and enable them to make choices, explore and experiment. The children respond well and develop confidence and competence in a range of skills. In a minority of the schools, the play is less effective, the planning lacks coherence and progression, and the teaching fails to develop the children's ideas and creativity.

3.34   The assessment of the children's progress in play remains a challenge for many teachers. In a significant minority of the schools, the assessment methods are too limited and variable in their effectiveness; in some instances, the teachers show a lack of understanding of learning and teaching through play.

How good is English in primary schools?

3.35   In most of the inspections where English was the focus, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good or better in a significant minority of schools at KS1, and in a minority of schools at KS2.

Figure 6: The quality of teaching in English

32	56	12

■ Grade 1 ■ Grade 2 ■ Grade 3 ■ Grade 4
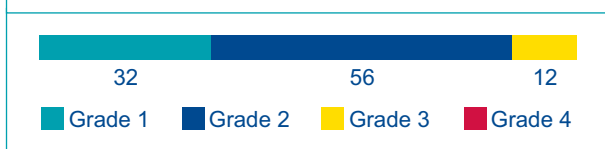
In most of the schools, the teaching of reading ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. In a minority of the schools, the teaching of reading has weaknesses which outweigh strengths. The Reading Recovery Programme continues to have a beneficial effect in helping children develop reading and writing skills.

3.36   A significant minority of the schools provide the children with good or better experiences in talking and listening. In contrast, in one-sixth of the lessons, there are more weaknesses than strengths, and insufficient opportunities for the children to ask questions and to engage in debate.

3.37   In approximately one-quarter of the schools, the teaching of writing is of a good or better standard. In these schools, the children have good opportunities to discuss, plan, draft and edit their work, and model their writing on various authors and story forms. In contrast, in other schools, there is a continuing over-reliance on the completion of restricted textbook and worksheet exercises, often linked to commercial reading and literacy schemes. To raise the standard of writing generally, the children need to experience a broader range of writing across the curriculum.

3.38   Most primary schools have developed satisfactory or better guidance to improve the teaching and learning of English. In a minority of the schools, there is an absence of appropriate planning for English; in these schools, the children's experiences are uneven, and the standards they attain are too low. Standards in English, as reflected in KS2 outcomes, are showing sustained progress. In 1999, 69% of 11 year olds attained level 4 or above; this improved to 74% in 2002, and to 76% in 2003. The picture is less positive in disadvantaged inner city areas.

How effective is the provision for special educational needs?

Figure 7: The quality of provision for special educational needs

27	52	17	4

■ Grade 1 ■ Grade 2 ■ Grade 3 ■ Grade 4
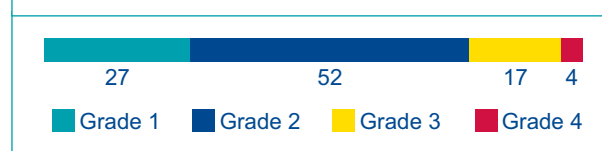
3.39   In most of the primary schools, the quality of the learning and teaching for children with special educational needs is satisfactory or better. Much special needs teaching takes place in situations where the children are withdrawn from class; in a majority of the schools, this involves additional support in literacy. Support is less evident for children who are experiencing difficulties in mathematics; where necessary, schools should remedy this imbalance in provision. In the best practice, in approximately a quarter of the schools inspected, the early diagnosis of the children's difficulties is effective, the special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO) have a clear understanding of their role, and maintain a close liaison with the class teachers. In these schools, appropriate education plans have been drawn up, are shared with the parents, and are reviewed and evaluated regularly. The children's progress is monitored regularly and targets are met. Within mainstream classes, the teachers plan effectively to cater for the needs of the children.

3.40   Important areas for improvement were also identified in a majority of the schools inspected, including the need for education plans to focus more specifically on the needs of the children, and for the

teachers to monitor and evaluate more closely the children's progress. The schools also need to evaluate more effectively the extent to which the support they provide leads to improvements in the children's attainment in literacy and numeracy.

How good is ICT in primary schools?

3.41   The Curriculum 2000 (C2k) initiative has improved ICT provision in primary schools. Information and communication technology is often given a high priority in planning and a majority of the schools have developed strategies to improve the teachers' expertise in ICT and to enhance the children's learning. The children respond well in lessons when they have good opportunities to work with ICT, and it is having a positive impact in broadening teaching and learning strategies. As a result, improvements are increasingly evident in the children's work, in the teachers' awareness of ICT and in their classroom planning and practice. The number of schools participating in the IT accreditation scheme offered by Northern Ireland's Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has increased significantly over the past two years; this reflects the development of the C2k programme and the increasing familiarisation of teachers with the software packages provided to schools.

Figure 8: The quality of ICT

| Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
28	54	15	3
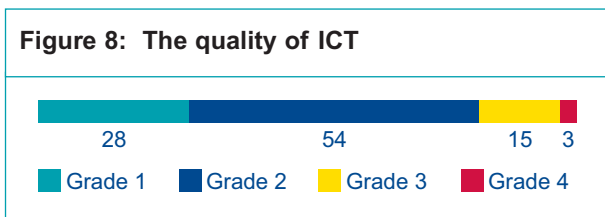
3.42   While the findings from primary school inspections from 2002 to 2004 reflect a noticeable improvement in the use of ICT, for most schools, there are continuing and significant issues which require attention. These include the need for:

◗   better integration of ICT into the curriculum;

◗   greater breadth and challenge, and more opportunities for problem-solving, investigative and creative activities;

◗   more coherent progression and monitoring of the children's ICT skills;

◗   the further professional development of the teachers.

How effective is mathematics in primary schools?

3.43   From 2002 to 2004, 54 inspections were conducted which focused on the mathematics area of study. The outcomes highlight significant strengths in the teaching and learning of mathematics, or strengths which outweigh weaknesses.

Figure 9: The quality of teaching in mathematics

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
44	54	2	
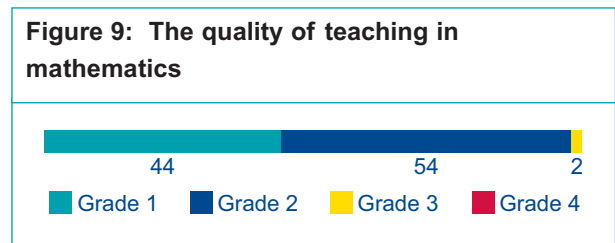
In almost all of the schools, the teachers plan appropriately for mathematics and, generally, take account of the range of abilities within the class. The standard of teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. There is a need for greater support for those children who experience difficulties in mathematics. Initiatives such as the Schools Support Programme (SSP) have enabled some schools to provide additional and imaginative support for aspects of numeracy and raise the children's attainment in and enjoyment of mathematics.

3.44   The children receive a broad range of mathematical experiences and have regular opportunities to apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum. In a minority of the lessons, they have insufficient opportunities to apply problem-solving and investigative approaches. In these lessons, there is an over-emphasis on basic mathematical knowledge and routine calculations.

3.45   Most teachers make effective use of qualitative and quantitative assessment data to help plan their teaching for mathematics and to provide for the needs of individual children. In the best practice, the teachers analyse systematically data from standardised and key stage tests to track the progress of individuals or groups, and to set targets for future learning. A feature of almost all of the

schools is the wide variety of resources and practical activities used to promote the children's learning and understanding; for example, in mathematics, the application of ICT is also becoming a more regular part of the children's experiences. As noted in Figure 11 below, the standards in mathematics attained by the children at the end of KS2 show sustained progress, and are higher than those achieved by children of the same age in England.

Key Stage assessment

3.46   The outcomes of key stage assessment for 1999 to 2003 are shown in Figures 10 and 11 below; greater detail is provided in Annex 2. Nearly all the children in KS1 attain levels 2 or 3 in English and mathematics, meeting Government targets for 2002 set in 1998. Since 1999, the proportion of children attaining at least level 4 in English and mathematics at KS2 has shown a steady increase; in 2003, for the first time in both subjects, more than three-quarters of the children attained this standard.

Figure 10: Key Stage 1: the proportion of children in Northern Ireland achieving at least Level 2

		1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
NI	English	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	Mathematics	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%

A KS1 assessment comparison with England is not provided as children are assessed at age 8 in Northern Ireland and at age 7 in England. Additional information on attainment at KS1 and KS2 is provided in Annex 2.

Figure 11: Key Stage 2: the proportion of children in Northern Ireland achieving at least Level 4

	English					Mathematics				
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
NI	69%	71%	73%	74%	76%	74%	75%	76%	77%	78%
England	68%	70%	72%	73%	72%	69%	72%	74%	74%	74%

How effective are liaison arrangements?

3.47   In a majority of the schools, links have been established with other primary schools.

Although pastoral links are maintained with most post-primary schools, curricular links have been established with only a minority. This leads to particular difficulties in situations where post-primary schools receive children from across a wide geographical area and from a significant number of contributory primary schools. There is a need to establish more effective curricular links to build on the children's previous achievements and learning experiences, and to ensure a smooth transition from primary to post-primary education.

How effective are links between the parents and the school?

3.48   The involvement of the parents in the education of their children and in the life and work of the school are key features of nearly all schools. Communication between the teachers and the parents is generally good. In a few schools, parental contact is inadequate and their involvement is not encouraged.

How effective is the support provided by the classroom assistants?

3.49   In almost all of the schools, the ancillary staff have a clear understanding of their duties, support the teachers and children effectively, and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. The classroom assistant's role has developed and widened in recent years. The survey of the Early Years Enriched Curriculum pilot carried out in the spring of 2004 reported that classroom assistants were involved in most lessons in promoting effectively the children's language and learning. Although the ELBs provide some training for ancillary staff, principals often report that this is insufficient to meet the professional developments needs of classroom assistants, and their changing role of promoting and supporting learning and teaching.

What is the range of extra-curricular activities provided in primary schools?

3.50   Almost all of the schools offer some extra-curricular activities, particularly music and sport, which enhance the children's learning experiences. Many teachers give generously of their time after school to promote, for example, sports coaching, clubs, and musical tuition.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION (PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY): TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

3.51   During the period of this report, the number of integrated schools serving children and pupils of primary and post-primary age has continued to grow. By September 2004, there were 55 recognised integrated schools; the total enrolment in these schools has increased from 14,626 to 16,089.

3.52   Approximately one-third of integrated schools are Controlled Integrated Schools; these have come into being through the process of transformation. Following a pilot survey of four schools in 2002, the Inspectorate is planning to inspect, in due course, all of the transforming schools. The findings of the pilot survey, and from the inspection of a further group of transforming schools, show that the schools and the wider community that they serve did not enter the process of transformation lightly; each school had to establish the degree of support and commitment that was available, and then fulfil the requirements for transformation that were laid down by DE. The transforming schools, typically, have a long established positive and inclusive ethos that celebrates the concept of integration. Much of the teaching is well prepared and provides worthwhile and challenging experiences that engage the pupils. All of the schools have adjusted aspects of the curriculum to reflect their change in status. It has taken more time than expected for most of the transforming schools to work towards establishing a religious balance in the staff and the enrolment. Those schools that are located in areas that are dominated by a single religious group have difficulty in attaining this balance.

Post-Primary Education, including Sixth Forms

POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION, INCLUDING SIXTH FORMS

Introduction

3.53   In the period covered by this report, there have been significant developments in the post-primary sector in Northern Ireland. Successive Ministers of Education have confirmed their intention to end academic selection, and recommendations have been made about the co-operative working of schools, colleges of further education, and supplier (formerly training) organisations. The new statutory curriculum for KS3 and KS4 will provide greater flexibility for schools and will include a stronger emphasis on skills and on preparation for life and work. Within inspection, there has been an increase in the attention given to self-evaluation leading to self-improvement in schools. This process has been supported by the Inspectorate's publication of Together Towards Improvement. The SSP has also continued to provide a combination of inspection and support that has proved successful for many of the schools involved.

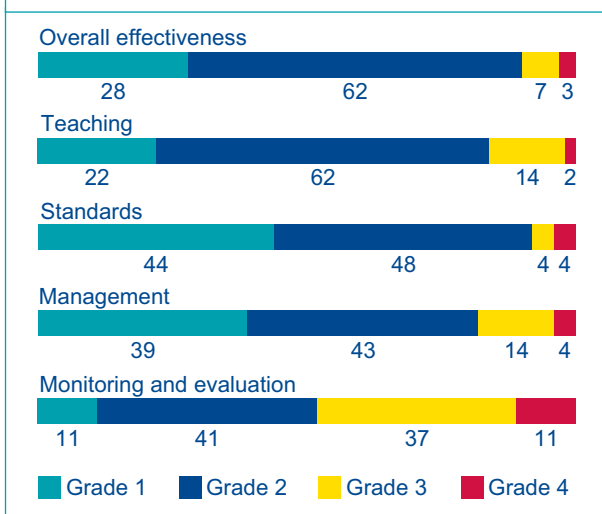### What are the main strengths in post-primary education?

The main strengths are:

◗   the caring ethos in most schools, with teachers committed to the welfare of the pupils;

◗   the good behaviour and co-operation shown by almost all of the pupils;

◗   the good pastoral care in a majority of the schools;

◗   the improvement in the quality of teaching, most of which has significant strengths, or strengths which outweigh weaknesses;

◗   the general continuing improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE and in GCE examinations;

◗   the improvements in the pupils' learning and experiences in English and in mathematics;

◗   the increased recognition by schools of the potential of ICT to improve learning and teaching, and the significant improvement in ICT resources through the C2k initiative; and

◗   the greater focus on self-evaluation as a strategy for improvement.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗   the need for all schools to comply fully with DE Circulars 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection; and 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils;

◗   the need to improve a minority of lessons in which the quality of teaching has more weaknesses than strengths, or has significant weaknesses;

◗   the provision and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs;

◗   the performance of low and under attaining pupils at GCSE, and the need to reverse the trend of the increasing numbers of boys who leave school with no qualifications;

◗   the generally inappropriate teaching in timetabled ICT classes at KS3, and the need for the further embedding of ICT across the curriculum;

◗   the narrow curriculum for sixth-form pupils in all schools, and in particular, the need to reverse the downward trend in the number of post-16 pupils studying modern languages, physics and mathematics;

◗   leadership in a minority of the schools;

◗   monitoring and evaluation in a significant minority of the schools; and, in a majority, the need to make more effective use of data analysis and benchmarking to influence classroom practice and to improve standards; and

◗   the deficiencies in the accommodation in many post-primary schools.

Figure 12: Overview of post-primary schools

Overall effectiveness

28	62	7	3

Teaching

22	62	14	2

Standards

44	48	4	4

Management

39	43	14	4

Monitoring and evaluation

11	41	37	11

■ Grade 1 ■ Grade 2 ■ Grade 3 ■ Grade 4

How good is the ethos in post-primary schools?

3.54   In most schools, the relationships between the pupils and the teachers and amongst the pupils are good. A caring ethos is evident in the work of the schools. The pupils are well behaved, courteous to visitors and demonstrate a sense of loyalty to their schools. In a small number of schools, the behaviour of a minority of the pupils is inappropriate. Since 2000-2001, the number of pupils expelled from post-primary schools has fallen while suspensions of pupils have risen by 12%.

3.55   In a majority of the schools, the teachers have worked hard to create a stimulating environment for learning. In contrast, in a minority, there are classrooms which are drab and where there is little recognition of the pupils' efforts. In many schools, the pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities; often teachers give significantly of their time and expertise to provide these enriching opportunities.

How effective are pastoral care provision and child protection arrangements?

3.56   In approximately two-thirds of the schools, the pastoral care and child protection procedures are in line with the guidance in DE's Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection; in just under one-third, urgent action needs to be taken to ensure full compliance with this guidance. The areas which most commonly require attention include the need for further training for deputy designated teachers for child protection; the more consistent highlighting of policies and procedures for substitute teachers; the need to ensure that all ancillary staff receive training, and that all parents are updated regularly about the school's complaints procedure. A few schools are working towards the implementation of the revised guidance in DE's Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils.

3.57   In a majority of the schools, there are effective policies to support pastoral care work. In almost all schools, there are personal, social and health education programmes that explore appropriately topics including anti-bullying, personal safety, relationships and discipline. A number of schools have other helpful approaches to support the pupils, including mentoring by the teachers, peer mentoring by senior pupils, and the use of counsellors from external agencies.

How good are the teaching and learning?

3.58   In the lessons observed during inspection, 22% had significant strengths; in 62% the strengths outweighed the weaknesses. In a majority of the schools, some of the learning and teaching observed was excellent. The weaknesses outweighed the strengths in 14% of the lessons observed; this represents an improvement on the patterns reported in the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999 to 2002. The quality of teaching is poor in 2% of the lessons. These patterns are consistent across the selective and non-selective sectors.

**Figure 13: The quality of teaching in KS3, KS4 and sixth form 2002-2004**

2000-2002

21	58	18	3

2002-2004

22	62	14	2

■ Grade 1 ■ Grade 2 ■ Grade 3 ■ Grade 4
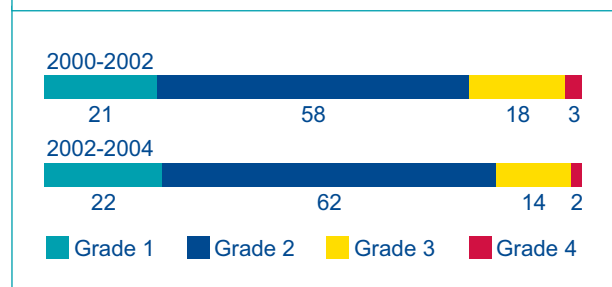
3.59   The features of the most effective practice observed in inspection include:

- well-planned, differentiated and challenging tasks;

- good opportunities for the pupils to give extended answers and to develop their own thinking;

- a good balance between practical and theoretical tasks;

- the sharing of the intended learning outcomes with the pupils at the start of a lesson and consolidation at the close to confirm their understanding and learning;

- the use of an effective range of teaching approaches;

- well-paced, relevant tasks which involve the pupils and provide them with effective opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning;

- the regular use of a variety of assessment methods to identify the pupils' learning needs and to inform future planning and classroom practice.

The features of the less effective practice include:

- planning which does not take account of the pupils' abilities and interests;

- unduly narrow teaching approaches and over-directed lessons;

- insufficient monitoring of the pupils' progression and attainment.

How good is English in post-primary schools?

Figure 14: The quality of English teaching

24	64	11	1

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4
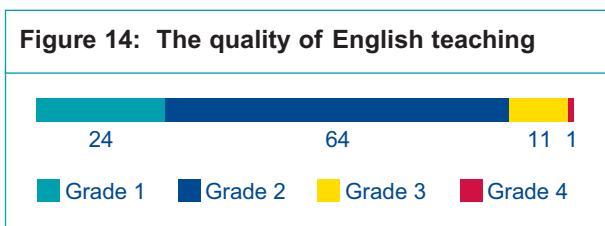
3.60   In a majority of the English lessons, there are more strengths than weaknesses. There is an increasing emphasis on developing the pupils' oral skills, and the use of questioning by teachers is improving, for example, at the beginning and conclusion of lessons to assist the pupils' learning. The pupils have suitable opportunities to become more versatile and independent in their writing. At KS4, the completion of assignments is not directing as much of the work as in previous years. Much useful work has been started at departmental level to introduce initiatives to bring about improvement. In a minority of the lessons, the work is over-directed and the pupils have too few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

3.61   Almost all of the schools inspected were involved in The Northern Ireland Literacy Strategy, a three-year programme of literacy support and development work. Inspection evidence shows that the teachers of English are becoming more adept at planning for improvement. The teachers of other subjects are beginning to give more explicit attention to improving the pupils' work in reading and writing. All of this is benefiting teaching and learning, particularly with those pupils who need additional help. In general, however, these pupils need more opportunity to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, and specialist teachers need to give more attention to improving the pupils' competence in all aspects of literacy.

How good is mathematics in post-primary schools?

Figure 15: The quality of teaching in mathematics

21	64	14	1

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4
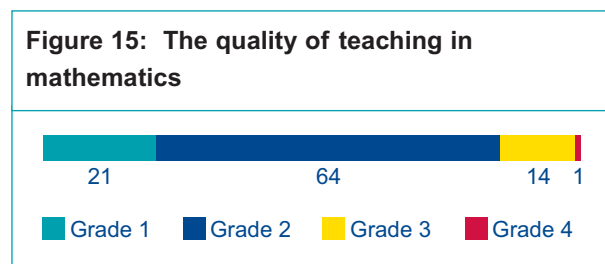
3.62   In most classes, the teaching of mathematics is clear and rigorous. Helpful individual support is provided for the pupils. The standard of their written work is good. In general, they need more opportunities to discuss their mathematics, explore their ideas, develop their reasoning, and acquire more independence in their work. A majority of the lessons where strengths outweighed weaknesses involved lower ability classes.

3.63   Almost all of the schools inspected were involved in The Northern Ireland Numeracy Strategy and participated in a three-year programme of mathematics support, with very good co-operation from the ELBs. Inspection evidence points to improved planning in mathematics departments, particularly planning to bring about improvement. There has also been a significantly greater emphasis on mental mathematics. Inspection evidence also shows an increase in the pupils' interest in mathematics, and some improvement in the standards of their mathematical thinking.

How good is ICT in post-primary schools?

3.64   A majority of post-primary schools identify ICT as a priority area for development, and the level of planning is generally good. Despite this, many schools experience difficulties in translating their policies into effective action to ensure better learning experiences for the pupils across the curriculum. The quality and extent of ICT resources have improved substantially; and access to computers for pupils and teachers has improved significantly. In the minority of schools that have succeeded in embedding ICT into a wide range of subjects, some or all of the following characteristics are evident:

◗   a whole-school focus on teaching and learning with self-review and evaluation;

◗   the effective leadership and management of ICT, and the encouragement given to teachers of specialist subjects to be innovative in its use;

◗   the ongoing professional development of staff;

◗   the flexible deployment of ICT resources to support teaching and learning approaches which interest and motivate the pupils;

◗   increasing use of an Intranet by a majority of staff.

3.65   The growing use of ICT by the pupils is increasing their involvement and enjoyment in learning, and is improving outcomes across subjects. In addition, the ICT competence and capabilities of most pupils are developing progressively, though opportunities to use these skills in subject work remain inconsistent. Most schools develop ICT

through timetabled lessons, particularly at KS3; in the majority of these schools, this work is often insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils, or for those with better-developed ICT capabilities gained in KS2. The pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT creatively, to solve problems, to design and use graphical images and animations, and to create web pages.

How effective is the provision made for special educational needs?

3.66   In a majority of the schools, the provision for special educational needs has significant strengths, or the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. In a significant minority of the schools, the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. In a small number, special needs provision continues to have significant weaknesses. There has been no discernible improvement in this pattern of provision since 2002.

3.67   Almost all of the schools have a policy that reflects well the Code of Practice for special educational needs. In many non-selective schools, special needs has an appropriately high priority in development planning, and funding is targeted specifically to improve provision. In the best practice, good procedures are in place to identify the pupils in need of help, and the SENCOs work closely with subject teachers to draw up education plans with measurable targets for individual pupils. These targets are reviewed regularly and there is evidence of progress. In contrast, in a significant minority of the schools, the education plans are not sufficiently precise in addressing the pupils' individual needs and there is little evidence of progress in their attainment. In a growing number of selective schools, appropriate provision is being made for pupils identified as having special educational needs.

3.68   In many schools, the pupils in need of special help are assisted through in-class and withdrawal support in English and, to a significantly less extent, in mathematics. Most of these pupils, however, continue to receive the greater part of their education through the teaching of the specialist subjects. Inspection evidence shows that there are more weaknesses than strengths in just under one-quarter of specialist lessons involving lower attaining pupils. The teaching and learning

experiences of lower attaining pupils should reflect better their abilities, needs and interests, and should focus more systematically on improving their standards of attainment.

Standards

3.69   In general, over the period covered by this report, the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 5 in KS3 assessment has remained unchanged, though there has been a slight fall in English and mathematics in 2002-2003. The advantage Northern Ireland had in standards of attainment, when compared to England, has all but disappeared since 1998-1999.

Figure 16: Key Stage 3: the proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 5					
English					
	98/99	**99/00**	**00/01**	**01/02**	**02/03**
NI	68%	69%	72%	73%	72%
England	64%	64%	64%	67%	69%
Mathematics					
	98/99	**99/00**	**00/01**	**01/02**	**02/03**
NI	70%	67%	69%	73%	71%
England	62%	65%	66%	67%	71%
Science					
	98/99	**99/00**	**00/01**	**01/02**	**02/03**
NI	65%	67%	67%	68%	68%
England	55%	59%	66%	67%	68%

The percentage of year 12 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C has remained unchanged. These statistics compare favourably with the corresponding figures for England over the same period. Additional comparative data from 1992-1993 to 2002-2003 highlighting trends at GCSE at grades A* to G in Northern Ireland, England and Wales is shown in Annex 5.

Figure 17: All Schools: attainment in GCSE						
		1998/ 99	**1999/ 00**	**2000/ 01**	**2001/ 02**	**2002/ 03**
% 5+ GCSEs A*-C	NI	56	57	57	59	59
	Eng	48	49	50	52	53
% No GCSE grades	NI	3	4	4	4	4
	Eng	6	6	5	5	5

This data excludes special, independent schools, and pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

Girls continue to outperform boys in GCSE. Overall, the pupils in single sex girls' schools achieve higher GCSE results than those in single sex boys' schools, with performance in co-educational schools at a point between the two. In addition, girls and boys perform better in non-selective co-educational schools than they do in single sex girls' or boys' non-selective schools; the difference in attainment is much less marked in selective schools.

Figure 18: GCSE: non-selective schools by gender and school type (2002-03)					
	Girls' Schools	**Boys' Schools**	**Co-ed Schools**	**Co-ed**	
				Girls	**Boys**
5+ GCSEs A*-C	42	26	38	47	30
No GCSEs	3	15	6	4	8

Figure 19: GCSE: selective schools by gender and school type (2002-2003)					
	Girls' Schools	**Boys' Schools**	**Co-ed Schools**	**Co-ed**	
				Girls	**Boys**
5+ GCSEs A*-C	97	94	96	98	95
7+ GCSEs A*-C	94	87	92	95	89

3.70   During the period covered by this report, there has been a steady increase in the number of pupils who leave school with no qualifications. This trend is a cause for concern, particularly so for boys, given that more than one in every 14 boys left school without any qualifications in 2001-2002. Taking into account those eligible for free school meals, the

proportion leaving without qualifications rises to more than one in every 6 boys.

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2001/02	943	7.4	365	3.0	1308	5.2
2000/01	819	6.4	401	3.2	1220	4.8
1999/2000	589	4.6	310	2.5	899	3.6
1998/99	478	3.7	205	1.6	683	2.7
1997/98	505	3.9	292	2.3	797	3.1
1996/97	584	4.5	345	2.7	929	3.6
1995/96[3]	280	2.1	117	0.9	397	1.5
1994/95	596	4.8	227	1.9	823	3.4
1993/94	632	5.3	246	2.2	878	3.8
1992/93	775	6.8	324	2.9	1099	4.9
1991/92	1193	9.9	536	4.7	1729	7.4
1990/91	1432	11.9	617	5.3	2049	8.6
1989/90	1694	13.6	767	6.4	2461	10.0
1988/89	2166	16.6	1027	8.5	3193	12.7
1987/88	2667	21.1	1329	11.3	3996	16.4

Figure 20: number and percentage of school leavers in Northern Ireland with no qualifications [1,2]

Vocational and work-related education: the KS4 Flexibility Initiative 2002-2004

3.71   The number of schools participating in the KS4 Flexibility Initiative has increased significantly from 33 schools in September 2000 to 117 non-selective schools (representing just under three-quarters of the sector) in September 2004; one selective school is also involved in the Initiative. In the participating schools, some 28% of the pupils are involved, compared to 19% from 2000 to 2002.

3.72   Most of these pupils continue to come from the lowest attaining and middle bands. The percentage taking five or more GCSE subjects is

generally low. There has been a marked reduction in the schools offering National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) accreditation as a result of the many difficulties encountered in achieving such accreditation in most work-based situations and vocational areas. CCEA's Occupational Studies Programme, introduced in September 2003, is an increasingly popular alternative and has attracted considerable support. Links with further education colleges and with supplier organisations are developing well. In addition to the wide range of job-sampling opportunities available, the pupils also gain from working with other pupils from across the community divide, and from working in a more adult and mature environment.

3.73   Most of the schools continue to see the KS4 Flexibility Initiative as an effective programme which provides valuable educational opportunities for the increasing number of pupils interested in a more vocational curriculum. The Initiative enhances the pupils' future employment and training prospects and helps develop their self-confidence, maturity and self-esteem. Typically, the schools report benefits such as improved attendance, behaviour, and motivation. In addition, they report that the Initiative continues to attract strong support from staff, pupils and parents.

Sixth Form

3.74   In 2003-2004, 62% of the 17 year-old cohort in Northern Ireland was in full-time education in schools. The main provision for sixth-form pupils is GCE to which there were over 28,000 entries in 2003-2004; this represents a steady increase over the previous four years. Figure 21 highlights significant changes in subject choices at GCE. Several subjects have experienced a decline in entries, notably economics, physics, mathematics and French. To provide better opportunities for young people living and working in an increasingly technological society, and in the wider European community, greater numbers of pupils should be encouraged to study the physical sciences, mathematics and modern languages in the sixth form.

1   The number in the table above may be overstated as a result of under-recording of qualifications; for example, on transferring to a new school, a pupil's previous qualifications may not be recorded.

2   The data for 2001/02 is the latest available.

3   Qualifications data was missing for 742 school leavers (approximately 3%).

Figure 21: GCE A level: subject entries 2000/2001–2003/2004

	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2003/ 04	Percentage change over 4 years
Biology	2600	2780	2731	3051	17.3%
Chemistry	1706	1610	1550	1742	2.1%
Physics	1486	1362	1387	1349	-9.2%
Mathematics	2437	2104	2078	2254	-7.5%
Business Studies	1429	1476	1459	1569	9.8%
Home Economics	434	483	534	552	27.2%
Art and Design	752	796	828	945	25.7%
Geography	2125	2055	2194	2085	-1.9%
History	1765	1850	1808	2000	13.3%
Economics	851	664	634	527	-38.1%
Religious Studies	1275	1300	1462	1672	31.1%
Politics	1059	1029	1025	1078	1.8%
Sociology	433	592	667	746	72.3%
English Literature	2306	2414	2499	2544	10.3%
Media Studies	202	203	310	338	67.3%
Irish	268	243	240	274	2.2%
French	1011	959	794	792	-21.7%
German	201	244	201	184	-8.5%
Italian	29	31	20	15	-48.3%
Spanish	375	397	405	432	15.2%
Total for all subjects	**26396**	**26156**	**26879**	**28320**	**7.3%**

How good is the teaching and learning at sixth form?

3.75   In 74% of the lessons observed, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses; 25% has significant strengths. The quality of teaching is sound or better, well informed by specialist knowledge, and focused strongly on the effective preparation of the pupils for external examinations. In the best practice, the pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic and confident, and maintain high standards of attainment.

Figure 22: The quality of teaching in sixth form 2002-2004

2000-2002
20   77   1 2

2002-2004
25   74   1

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4
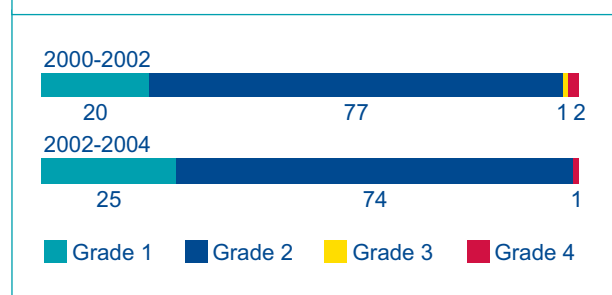
How good are standards at sixth form?

3.76   From 1998 to 2003, the percentage of the pupils in selective schools achieving three or more GCE subjects at grades A to C increased substantially from 47% to 64%. The increase achieved by pupils in the non-selective sector was not so significant, although the percentage gaining three or more GCE subjects at grades at A to C rose from 24% to 33%. Additional comparative data highlighting trends at GCE at grades A to E in Northern Ireland, England and Wales is shown in Annex 5.

Figure 23: Attainment in GCE A level and GNVQ (Intermediate)

	1997/98		2002/03	
	Selective	Non- Selective	Selective	Non- Selective
% Achieving 3+ A Levels Grades A-C	47	24	64	33
% Achieving 2+ A Levels Grades A-E	95	77	98	88
% Achieving 1+ A Levels Grades A-E	100	94	100	96
% Achieving GNVQ Intermediate (Full)	0	80	0	85

As in GCSE, girls continue to outperform boys at GCE. The results attained by girls are considerably better than those achieved by boys, particularly those obtained by girls in single-sex selective schools. However, the differential between the results for girls and boys in non-selective schools is

significantly less than that noted in the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002.

Figure 24: GCE A level: non-selective schools by gender and school type 2002-03

	Girls' Schools	Boys' Schools	Co-ed Schools	Co-ed	
				Girls	Boys
2+ A Levels A-E	90	87	88	90	83
3+ A Levels A-C	29	20	36	39	30

Figure 25: GCE A level: selective schools by gender and school type 2002-03

	Girls' Schools	Boys' Schools	Co-ed Schools	Co-ed	
				Girls	Boys
3+ A Levels A-C	71	58	63	66	58

How effective is the curriculum at sixth form?

3.77   The intended outcomes of Curriculum 2000, particularly added breadth within the post-16 curriculum, and the development of the key skills, have not been achieved. In general, only a minority of schools mix academic and vocational courses. The current position also falls significantly short of the proposals in the Post-Primary Review which require schools to offer pupils a choice of at least 27 courses, of which one-third must be academic and one-third vocational. Many non-selective schools offer a limited range of subjects to small numbers of pupils and are not in a position to provide the balanced curriculum which will now be required; for example, 24% of schools offer fewer than ten subjects at sixth form, and almost 40% have sixth forms with fewer than 80 pupils.

3.78   The competition for higher education places and the high premium that is placed on examination outcomes create a high level of motivation among most sixth-form pupils. Such a sharp focus on examination outcomes can be at the expense of the development of the pupils' key skills and wider skills, and can limit curricular breadth. Moreover, in such competitive situations, and in the context of demographic decline, schools can place too great an emphasis on retaining sixth-form pupils rather than directing them towards more suitable provision. Some pupils are also content to stay

within a known environment, even when the choice of subjects is limited, rather than move to a new situation where there is greater and more appropriate choice. In these circumstances, it will be increasingly important that pupils at KS4 have better access to improved careers education, information and guidance.

3.79   In 2002-2003, of some 23,700 sixth-form pupils in schools, only 15% participated in a link course with a college of further education. Half of these experienced a short enrichment programme; the others followed courses in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) or studied a course at GCE. The majority of schools providing link courses with further education colleges are non-selective; only a minority of selective schools are involved. The benefits from such links include a wider choice of courses, and good opportunities for the pupils to learn in different ways and to avail of high specification resources and teaching expertise, including staff with industrial and/or business or business-related professional experience. Despite these advantages, various factors prevent these benefits from being realised more widely. These include increasing competition between schools and colleges for funds on the basis of pupils/students enrolled, and the adverse effects of sectarian divisions in the community which, in certain areas, can cause difficulties for some schools in arranging link courses with colleges of further education.

How good are the management and leadership in post-primary schools?

3.80   Inspection evidence indicates that in 34% of the schools, the leadership of the principal is good; it is satisfactory in a further 50%. In the remaining schools, the leadership is not good enough, and affects adversely the quality of teaching and learning, the effectiveness of governance, and the morale of the teachers.

3.81   Where the principal's leadership and management are not good enough, the staff's ability to respond effectively to change is limited; in addition, standards often fluctuate unduly. In those schools where the standard of teaching and learning is poor in some specialist subjects, insufficient action is taken by those with management responsibilities to

effect improvement. In a few instances, underachievement is tolerated over a significant period of time; the expectations of management, staff, and the pupils are too low; and insufficient attention is given to bringing about improvement.

How effective are monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation in post-primary schools?

3.82 Teachers and senior management are aware of the importance of monitoring and evaluation in bringing about improvement in provision and outcomes. In most schools, useful strategies are being implemented to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Increasingly, emphasis is being given to the analysis of examination results and other performance indicators and comparisons are being made with benchmarked and subject-specific data from similar schools in Northern Ireland. Despite this, only a minority of the schools use data analysis and benchmarking in a sufficiently effective manner to influence classroom practice and to improve the pupils' standards of work. In a small number of schools, there is inadequate use of comparative data to monitor the pupils' external examination results and whole-school standards.

Staffing

3.83 In most schools, the teachers are deployed effectively. In a majority of the schools, the teachers with specific responsibilities have well-defined roles and undertake their duties effectively. In almost all of the schools, the classroom assistants are deployed well to support teaching and the pupils' learning.

Accommodation

3.84 In a majority of the post-primary schools inspected since September 2002, the quality of accommodation generally fell short of the standards in DE's Building Handbook. Much of the accommodation provides a bleak environment for teaching and learning, and many of the lessons observed were conducted in temporary accommodation of a poor quality. Despite the best efforts of the teachers to create and maintain a positive ethos conducive to learning, much of the accommodation is poor and affects adversely the pupils' learning. In almost all of the post-primary

schools inspected, the accommodation is not conducive to effective and efficient schooling. In contrast, accommodation in the new or refurbished schools inspected provides the pupils with bright learning environments, excellent specialist rooms, and resources matched well to the needs of the curriculum.

Further Education

FURTHER EDUCATION

Introduction

3.85   Since 2002, several significant reports have been published including the Further Education Review, the Post-Primary Review, and the review of the Northern Ireland curriculum. Each has resulted, at least in part, from the changing nature of the world of work, the influence of the global economy and its impact on Northern Ireland, and the need to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in education and training provision within the region. Each report highlights the need for today's learners and employees to have transferable skills that enable them to cope with change and to work collaboratively. They also need to have the necessary literacy, mathematical and technology skills to take advantage of a knowledge-based economy, and the reasoning and analytical skills that such an economy demands. The challenge for Government, and for further education (FE), is to realise these strategic aims in education and training programmes.

3.86   In recent years, the FE sector has had a deservedly higher profile, particularly through its increasing contribution to economic development in Northern Ireland. The greatly enhanced accommodation for FE has also improved its image. The nature of further education means that DEL and the FE sector have often to respond quickly to the needs of business and industry. However, the pressures of competing in the market place and the expansion of vocational education in schools, have not necessarily led to the most effective and efficient provision and to the flexibility that is required.

3.87   FE Means Business, published by DEL in 2004, is timely in re-establishing the sector's aims to promote lifelong learning to strengthen economic development, enhance social cohesion, and advance the individual's skills and learning. If realised, these will have a profound and positive effect on the economic development of Northern Ireland. The publication in 2004 of the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland may also help develop the education, training and employment sectors. It highlights the need to address the decline in traditional industries, the high percentage of inactive

adults, and demographic decline. The report stresses the need for a better understanding of occupational competence and employability skills, and should encourage consultation between the awarding bodies and the new sector skills councils to ensure that what is assessed is valuable and relevant.

3.88   Despite these developments, there is continuing uncertainty in the FE sector that the government departments involved with education, training and employment are working in a sufficiently cohesive way to ensure the effective implementation of the strategies set out in the above reports. It will also be important that the FE colleges reconsider the purpose and effectiveness of some of their current assessment practices. In many areas of the curriculum, the evidence from inspection points to a reduction in the time afforded to teaching, and to extending the learning of the students, particularly those aged 16 to19. There is, instead, undue emphasis on meeting the minimal demands of the assessment requirements of the awarding bodies, and of a narrowing of assessment to that which is most easily measurable. The size of the sector has remained relatively stable between 2000-2003; achievement and success rates have also remained stable.

Figure 26: Further Education: students, staff and lecturing hours 2000/01–2002/03

Total FTE Students (Gross)			Total FTE staff			Average Lecturer Hours		
2000 /01	2001 /02	2002 /03	2000 /01	2001 /02	2002 /03	2000 /01	2001 /02	2002 /03
43,331.18	43,735.69	43,182.66	2,803.66	2.814.16	2,760.12	18.79	18.99	18.73

Figure 27: Achievement rates 2001-2002 to 2002-2003

Achievement rates: successful completion of the course	2001-2002	2002-2003
Full-time students	80 %	81%
Part-time students	64%	64%
Overall	67%	67%

3.89   The percentage of 16-17 year olds in FE in Northern Ireland has remained at 26% of the cohort in full-time education. Since 2002, the percentage of the cohort in full-time education in schools has risen from 68% to 71%. This trend reflects the growing emphasis on vocational education in schools, and the desire of most young people to stay within a known environment. FE continues, in the main, to attract from among the 16-year old population, those with lower academic ability.

What are the main strengths in Further Education?

The main strengths in FE are:

◗ the improving profile of the sector, as reflected in the improving collaboration with higher education, post-primary schools, business and industry, and with voluntary and community groups;

◗ the increasing emphasis on lifelong learning;

◗ the satisfactory or better quality of most of the teaching;

◗ the increase in part-time enrolments;

◗ the significant impact of the Essential Skills Strategy, notably in the number of learners enrolled and the number of tutors in training;

◗ the success rates for those students who complete their courses;

◗ the increase in staff with recent industrial and business experience;

◗ the improving provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;

◗ the alignment of provision with the strategic aims of DEL;

◗ the improvement in self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements;

◗ the much improved FE estate and improved equipment and resources, including the infrastructure for information learning technology (ILT);

◗ the success of a few colleges in providing, for example, courses for local businesses, and their success in generating more of their income;

◗ the increased cohesion across the sector with all 16 colleges now full members of the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC); and

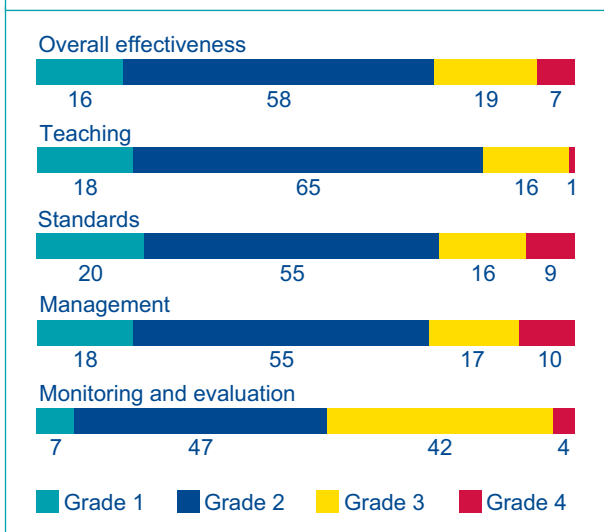◗ the expansion of the Lecturers into Industry scheme.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗ the need for more innovative and differentiated teaching and learning to develop the students' ability to apply their learning, and to think critically and creatively;

◗ the need for more effective and broadly-based assessment strategies;

◗ the provision and quality in careers education and guidance; communication, numeracy and ICT; citizenship, health and social justice programmes; and the wider skills of problem-solving, team work, and improving one's own learning;

◗ the need for the increased use of ILT to enhance the teaching and learning;

◗ college development planning, especially the need to improve quality assurance, staff development and curriculum development;

◗ the need for the clearer identification of good practice, and the quality assurance and quality leadership needed to bring that about;

◗ the need for increased coherence in the work of the sector and a reduction in the number of short-term initiatives;

◗ the need for increased stability in funding and more manageable accountability measures;

- the strengthening of the work in applied science, the creative technologies, and in business and management;

- the need to reduce the undue and often inappropriate reliance on part-staff; and

- the quality of teacher education, including the support for part-time staff.

Figure 28: Overview Further Education

Overall effectiveness
16 58 19 7

Teaching
18 65 16 1

Standards
20 55 16 9

Management
18 55 17 10

Monitoring and evaluation
7 47 42 4

Grade 1   Grade 2   Grade 3   Grade 4

The scope of the Inspectorate's work in FE over the period 2002-2004

3.90   The Inspectorate carries out inspections of institutes/colleges and specialist visits, and also undertakes work commissioned directly by DEL. From 2002 to 2004, six colleges were inspected and almost 30 specialist visits were made, amounting to the observation of over 1,100 teaching sessions. In addition, the Inspectorate scrutinised the annual development plans for each college inspected and completed surveys of Essential Skills (adult education in literacy and numeracy), foundation degrees, ILT, science, special learning difficulties and disabilities, and of the pilot programme for small and medium enterprises in FE. The Inspectorate also monitored the quality of the work in the centres of excellence, the work-based learning initiative, and the impact of the strategic re-structuring fund. It has contributed also to an evaluation of the Lecturers into Industry Scheme, to the review of teacher education, and has offered advice on the Essential Skills Strategy.

3.91   The Inspectorate has also increasingly moved away from inspecting specific courses to inspecting the totality of the provision for learners, including student support, tutorial provision, key and essential skills, and careers education and guidance. It is in these areas that provision is often most in need of improvement yet frequently they have been much less rigorously evaluated by management. The colleges tend to focus too exclusively on those aspects of provision which are subject to external accreditation, and give much less attention to the generic and cross-college issues identified above; only in a very few colleges do the teaching staff have a clearly articulated and shared understanding of the generic competences and the standards of achievement they would wish their students to acquire.

Standards and outcomes: how well do learners achieve?

3.92   In all of the main curriculum areas, the standards of work achieved by the students who complete their courses are mostly good. Some 75% of the work has more strengths than weaknesses; some 20% has significant strengths. The work is best where the standards achieved by the students broadly reflect the occupational standards required by the industry and where the students develop the capacity to understand and apply their learning.

3.93   Retention rates across the courses inspected are satisfactory; 74% are satisfactory or better. This reflects the ability of the staff to engage their students by providing teaching that is relevant, stimulating and well matched to the students' learning styles, prior achievements and abilities. Where retention is a significant area for improvement, this often reflects poor careers education and guidance, and an insufficient emphasis on managing and improving individual learning.

3.94   The development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy for full-time and part-time students on vocational courses remains poor; only 25% of the courses inspected were considered to be satisfactory. More commonly, the planning for improving the students' work is poor and, influenced by the requirements of external accreditation, a minimalist approach is taken in relation to the

development of their wider literacy and numeracy competences. Since 2000, and in response to poor standards and outcomes, almost every college has changed its provision for key skills, but the changes are often structural and rarely address the fundamental issues of quality of teaching and of the standards achieved. Drop out rates are high and the numbers proceeding to level 3 courses are negligible.

3.95   The provision for adults with poor levels of competence in literacy and numeracy has improved significantly through the implementation of the Essential Skills Strategy, the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curricula, and the amalgamation of essential and key skills. The enrolment of the target number, set by DEL, of 14,500 learners has also been achieved in 2004. These efforts have improved the profile of essential skills, and the opportunities for adults to return to learning.

3.96   The recruitment of students varies across the curriculum areas and is contingent on many different factors. The more able students aged 16 to19 tend to stay at school to undertake GCE courses, or the Advanced Certificate in Vocational Education. Many full-time courses in FE provide a programme of only 15 hours teaching/contact time per week, compared to more than double that in most schools.

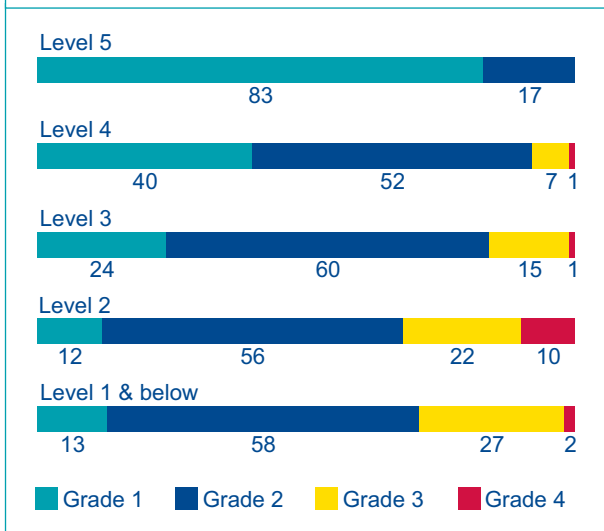## How effective are teaching and learning?

3.97   In 80% of the provision, the quality of teaching and learning has significant strengths, or more strengths than weaknesses. The same patterns are reflected in the individual lessons inspected; in 83%, there are many strengths, or more strengths than weaknesses. In 17% of the lessons, there are significant weaknesses, or more weaknesses than strengths.

3.98   The vast majority of the teaching is characterised by a high level of commitment by the staff, good relationships between the staff and the students and amongst the students themselves, and by the good level of support provided for the students. The teaching also reflects an increasing emphasis on good planning, formative assessment, and a significant investment in staff development in all of the colleges. The attention given to the

process of learning, aided by increased self-evaluation, has also contributed. Increasingly, curricular collaboration among colleges, often initiated by the projects managed by the Learning Skills and Development Agency, has helped to raise the quality of professional dialogue and support. Despite this, the range of teaching strategies deployed is often narrow. The teaching is most effective where it involves good pace, is matched suitably to the needs, abilities and interests of the students, and where the students are helped to manage and take decisions about their own learning. The most effective work also demonstrates an appropriate balance between the acquisition and application of knowledge and the development and application of skills. This balance is best achieved where the teaching staff have good links with other professionals in the workplace and are able to access and use suitable case-study material.

3.99   Where staff have participated in the Lecturers into Industry Initiative, or where there is a sectoral or lead body with which they can liaise, or where lecturers can draw on their own recent industrial or business experience, the teaching, training and learning almost invariably benefit. There is a continuing need to ensure that the benefits are fully disseminated to other staff, and that the links established between the host business or industry and the lecturer or college are maintained. There also needs to be greater collaboration between the Lecturers into Industry scheme and the Centres of Excellence. These centres have a role to play in the dissemination of new processes and technologies identified during placement and in supporting good practice.

3.100   The Centres of Excellence are well resourced and their work is of a high standard. A recent inspection of one centre described the standards of the students' occupational skills as consistently good across the courses inspected, and noted that the quality and presentation of their work reflected the standards expected in modern industry. The Centres of Excellence are required to maintain a high level of provision across the full range of their courses and their staff must keep at the forefront of developments in their respective disciplines. A small number of colleges have had difficulty in maintaining these standards.

Figure 29: The quality of teaching by level of course provision

Level 5

| 83 | 17 |

Level 4

| 40 | 52 | 7 | 1 |

Level 3

| 24 | 60 | 15 | 1 |

Level 2

| 12 | 56 | 22 | 10 |

Level 1 & below

| 13 | 58 | 27 | 2 |

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4

3.101   When the analysis of lesson grades at each level is compared, there are significant contrasts. All of the work inspected at National Qualifications Framework level 5 (degree level), and 92% at level four, had more strengths than weaknesses, or many strengths. At level three, 84% of the work had more strengths than weaknesses. Some 71% and 68% of the sessions observed at level 1 and below (foundation level), and at level 2 had more strengths than weaknesses while 29% and 32% respectively had more weaknesses than strengths, or many weaknesses.

3.102   The students taking courses at Levels 1 and 2 often require the more skilful teaching. Significantly, the findings from inspection indicate that the standard of the teaching at these levels requires the greatest improvement. Too often the teachers focus unduly on providing information or on practising skills without giving sufficient attention to determining and developing the students' understanding of the concepts involved and assisting them to manage better their own learning. The differentiation of learning, to meet more effectively the different abilities and prior achievements of the learners, continues to be an important area for improvement.

How good is the use of ILT in FE?

3.103   All colleges recognise the importance of ILT as an essential tool for learning. The positive impact of continued investment from DEL is

noticeable in the good quality ILT infrastructure across the sector, and the improved levels of personal staff confidence and competence. Nevertheless, only a few of the colleges have embedded ILT effectively across the curriculum to enhance and extend the students' learning. Overall, the impact on teaching and learning of the significant investment in the technological infrastructure and associated staff development is limited.

3.104   Although DEL continues to provide significant financial support for ILT, the impetus of its initial strategy for the FE sector has now greatly diminished. The lack of appropriate targets for curriculum and staff development, and the need for a coherent strategy for e-learning, are constraints on the effective embedding of ILT into the work of the colleges. Most full-time FE staff have good basic ICT skills, but there is a need for continued development. Only a small number have reached the stage where ILT is changing significantly, and for the better, the way their students learn. In almost all colleges, there is a need for a sharper focus on the pedagogy of e-learning rather than on content and resources. In addition, little use is made of ILT to facilitate electronic links with business, industry and schools.

3.105   The use of the Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to support learning is increasing, but it remains insufficient. Many staff have a good awareness of the potential of this technology but few have the necessary skills to use it effectively. Where VLEs are used well the students work more autonomously, and part-time students are better supported through direct electronic contacts and by remote access to learning resources.

Management and leadership: monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation

3.106   The strengths of leadership are most evident in the day-to-day operational management, in structures and procedures, and in the management of staffing and resources. They are also evident in the establishment of links and partnerships, particularly with business and industry; and - increasingly - with schools, and with the voluntary and community sectors. In the early days of incorporation, the demands of providing FE as a public service in a competitive market place resulted

in management focusing on administrative and budgetary matters. Since 2002, there has been a re-focusing on curriculum issues and on greater inter-college collaboration, especially at middle management level.

3.107   Since the mid-1990s, a significant part of the Inspectorate's work in FE has been to promote self-evaluation leading to self-improvement. It has done that, not only by making the scrutiny of college self-evaluation reports a central part of inspection, but also by publishing the performance indicators used in inspection. The revision of Inspecting Quality: Raising Standards (IQ:RS) in 2003 has encouraged greater rigour in self-assessment by leadership and management, the development of a quality culture, and an improvement in the evaluative reports compiled by the colleges. Although there is evidence of improvement, inspection evidence shows that only 50% of self-evaluation reports are of a satisfactory or better standard; those which are less than satisfactory do not contain the necessary analysis of performance data, do not provide a sufficient assessment of teaching and learning, and tend to be more descriptive than evaluative.

3.108   The main areas for improvement in management within FE continue to be the need for strategic curricular leadership, more systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the use of a wider range of quantitative and qualitative indicators to determine the effectiveness of what is provided.

Curricular provision: changing needs and patterns

3.109   The focus on the six priority skill areas vital to the further development of the economy of Northern Ireland (computing, construction, electronics, hospitality, catering and tourism, manufacturing engineering and software engineering) has brought about significant improvements in these areas. Other curricular areas are also in need of attention. There is relatively little provision made for the applied sciences apart from that offered within the access courses for mature students seeking entry to higher education. Although there are some innovative courses in biotechnology, and in renewable energy and waste management, only half of the colleges provide

applied science courses, and there is no coherent science strategy for the sector. The provision of modern languages has also declined in recent years; what remains is designed mainly to meet the needs of the tourist market. The stronger business and political links between Europe and Northern Ireland, and increased competition within the European market, emphasise the value of proficiency in a relevant modern European language alongside the development of vocational expertise. The examination boards and awarding bodies, and the colleges, have been slow to provide suitable courses that are integrated into other subject areas, notably business and management, leisure and tourism, and hospitality. The inclusion of the creative technologies within the Lecturers into Industry scheme, along with the proposed development of a sector skills council, should help to fill the vacuum that has emerged between vocational programmes in the creative areas of art and design and the associated industries.

Training

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TRAINING

Introduction

3.110   Jobskills and New Deal have continued to be important training and employment programmes for DEL and have made a significant contribution towards meeting its strategic objectives. Furthermore, DEL also provides training and employment programmes - such as the Training for Work scheme - for a smaller number of unemployed adults not eligible for Jobskills or New Deal. The Inspectorate provides inspection services for all training and employment programmes for which DEL has responsibility.

3.111   Jobskills is aimed at providing young people aged 16 to 24 seeking to enter employment with NVQs and an appropriate framework of key skills. Over the last three years, the number of trainees registered on Jobskills programmes has remained constant at approximately 15,500 each year; this represents a high participation rate among young people in Northern Ireland compared with similar training schemes in England and Wales. During the same period, however, the number of supplier (formerly training) organisations providing programmes through Jobskills has fallen from 104 to 92. In ten supplier organisations, recruitment levels have decreased to less than ten trainees, and, as a result, most of these organisations provide only a limited range of training experiences.

3.112   New Deal aims to get the long-term unemployed into permanent employment through a combination of work experience and vocational training. Participation on the New Deal training programme for young adults aged 18 to 24 years of age increased from almost 6,800 in 2001-2002 to nearly 7,900 in 2003-2004. In contrast, over the same period, participation for adults aged over 25 years decreased significantly from 10,350 to just less than 6,500. This decrease is attributed to the significant increase in the number of unemployed adults finding jobs. A majority of participants starting New Deal programmes in 2003-2004 had previously participated in the scheme, but did not move to employment.

3.113   A majority of young people and adults commencing training and employment programmes have poor or no qualifications; only a minority have four or more GCSEs at grade C or better. In addition, a significant minority of the trainees have low levels of communication and numeracy skills, poor attitudes to training, and learning and/or behavioural difficulties; all of these represent a serious barrier to the achievement of their training goals and eventual employment. A small number have GCE A levels, National Diplomas, or higher qualifications.

What are the main strengths in training?

The main strengths are:

◗   the high participation rate in training and employment programmes;

◗   the effective training and employment programmes provided by the majority of supplier organisations;

◗   the new training initiatives for trainees with poor attitudes to training and learning;

◗   the implementation of new arrangements for self-evaluation, development planning, and inspection aimed at promoting continuous improvement;

◗   the good start made to disseminate good practice across the training sector;

◗   the effective leadership and management of a majority of supplier organisations; and

◗   the effective self-evaluation reports and development plans produced by a majority of supplier organisations.
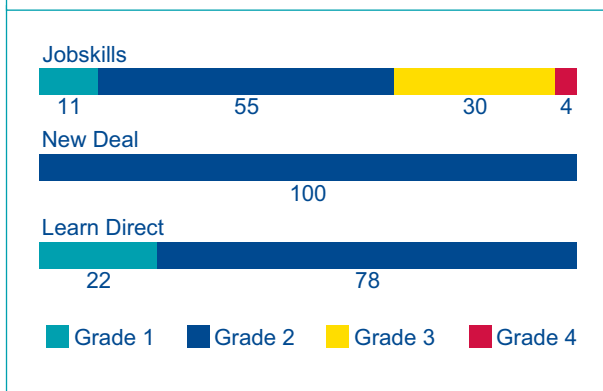
What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗   the need for the training sector to respond more effectively to the skills requirements of the Northern Ireland economy;

◗   the poor attitudes to training, and the low levels of communication and numeracy skills, of a significant minority of trainees;

◗   the low levels of retention, success, and progression to employment achieved by a

significant minority of supplier organisations;

◗ the recurrent weaknesses in training of a significant minority of supplier organisations;

◗ the lack of suitable support arrangements to assist supplier organisations to address recurrent weaknesses in training; and

◗ the significant minority of supplier organisations that do not have effective quality assurance arrangements, and do not carry out appropriate self-evaluation of the quality of their provision.

Figure 30: Overview Training

Jobskills

| 11 | 55 | 30 | 4 |

New Deal

| 100 |

Learn Direct

| 22 | 78 |

■ Grade 1   ■ Grade 2   ■ Grade 3   ■ Grade 4

Are training and employment schemes providing the skills important to Northern Ireland's economy?

3.114   Jobskills is structured on three levels: Access (NVQ level 1), Traineeship (NVQ level 2) and Modern Apprenticeship (NVQ level 3). There are approximately 15% of trainees on Access training programmes, 50% on the Traineeship programme, and 35% on the Modern Apprenticeship programme. From 2002 to 2004, recruitment to the Access and Traineeship programmes decreased by approximately 10% in contrast to the15% increase in the Modern Apprenticeship programmes.

3.115   There has also been a fall in recruitment to the priority skills areas recognised by DEL as important to the Northern Ireland economy. On the Traineeship programme, the greatest level of recruitment is to programmes in construction, administration, social work and care, hair and beauty,

mechanical engineering, and motor vehicle maintenance. Low numbers of trainees are recruited into information technology, electrical/electronic engineering, and hospitality, three of the priority skills areas. On the Modern Apprenticeship programme, recruitment to the priority skills areas of construction, electrical/electronic engineering, and mechanical engineering has decreased by an average of 12%. The fall in recruitment to the priority skills areas has been offset by recruitment to other vocational areas. Overall, the Traineeship and Modern apprenticeship programmes are not meeting sufficiently the skills needs in occupational areas considered important to the economy of Northern Ireland.

Figure 31: Recruitment to the three strands of Jobskills 2002-2004

Strand	October 2002	October 2003	October 2004	Total
Access	2570	2321	2221	7112
Traineeship	7757	7528	7172	22457
Modern Apprenticeship	5402	6132	6360	17894

Figure 32: Recruitment to the Traineeship Programmes 2001-2004

Occupational Area	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	Total
Construction	1745	1709	1935	5389
Administration	666	600	562	1828
Social Work & Care	557	443	471	1471
Hair & Beauty	438	424	497	1359
Mechanical Engineering	495	437	373	1305
MV Repair and Maintenance	369	398	386	1153

Figure 33: Recruitment to Modern Apprenticeship Programmes 2001-2004				
Occupational Area	**2001/02**	**2002/03**	**2003/04**	**Total**
Construction	921	717	832	2470
Electrical/Electronic Engineering	529	474	485	1488
Catering	299	488	460	1247
Social Work & Care	207	243	562	1012
Mechanical Engineering	355	265	247	867
MV Repair and Maintenance	263	260	264	787
Retailing/ Warehousing	155	124	382	661

3.116   There is a need to rationalise the New Deal provision across the training sector to ensure supplier organisations are more responsive to the needs of trainees. The trainees eligible for New Deal meet a Personal Adviser from the local Jobcentre who advises and prepares them for work during a Gateway period lasting up to four months. Ideally, trainees move from Gateway to a job. If this is not possible, the trainees are offered a range of options, which include the Employment Option organised through the Jobcentre, or the Environmental Task Force, Voluntary Sector, Full-time Education and Training, and Preparation for Employment Options provided by one of 26 supplier organisations approved to provide New Deal programmes. Over the last three years, however, an average of only 18% of trainees left the Gateway period to employment, and did not require further financial subsidies from DEL. About 5% of trainees leave the Gateway period to the Employment option organised through the Jobcentres and approximately 25% of trainees progress to one of the options provided by supplier organisations. The destinations of the remainder are unknown, or they transfer to other forms of government benefits such as incapacity benefit, or to other education and training programmes. Over the past three years, recruitment levels to New Deal have remained low in the majority of supplier organisations; only five supplier organisations have average occupancy levels of more than 100 trainees, and 16 have less than 50.

3.117   Since 2003, a new Essential Skills training option has been offered to those trainees identified during the New Deal Gateway period as having weaknesses in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy; these deficiencies seriously inhibit their chances of finding, and remaining in, sustained employment. The uptake on this option has been very low; less than 100 trainees from across Northern Ireland selected it in the first year of its introduction. The significant number of trainees leaving the Gateway period with deficiencies in Essential Skills is a major barrier to meeting the skills needs of Northern Ireland.

What changes have been made to inspection arrangements to promote improvements in training?

3.118   Over the period 2002-2004, the Inspectorate has made significant changes to the inspection of the training and employment programmes for which DEL has responsibility. The revised arrangements are aimed at promoting continuous improvement in all supplier organisations through a programme of inspections supported by annual self-assessment and development planning. The inspection programme is agreed annually with DEL and ensures the inspection of each supplier organisation once every four years compared to the previous ten-year cycle. The new cycle contributes effectively towards a comprehensive quality assurance of training across all supplier organisations.

3.119   The Inspectorate grades supplier organisations on a four-point scale. Since April 2004, these grades have been published in inspection reports. As a result, excellence in training is more clearly identified and disseminated. There is also a greater focus on supplier organisations that provide poor quality training, and in particular, on a clearer identification of areas for improvement in leadership and management. The publication of grades provides DEL with a framework to identify common recurring areas for improvement across the training sector, and the opportunity to devise suitable strategies with which to address them.

3.120   The Inspectorate promotes self-evaluation and development planning as key elements in continuous improvement in the training sector. Since

2003, all supplier organisations have been required by DEL to carry out annually a self-evaluation of the quality of their provision, and to produce a development plan to address identified areas for improvement. The quality and rigour of these self-evaluation reports and development plans are evaluated by DEL. Prior to inspection, supplier organisations now provide the Inspectorate with their annual self-evaluation reports and development plans. During inspection, these materials play an important part in the Inspectorate's evaluation of an organisation's quality assurance and management arrangements. Over the past two years, the Inspectorate has delivered a series of workshops to support supplier organisations in implementing effective self-evaluation and development planning.

What is the evidence from inspections?

3.121   From September 2002 to June 2004, inspection of Jobskills provision was carried out in 27 supplier organisations. Three organisations demonstrated significant strengths, indicating a mainly excellent quality of provision. In 15 supplier organisations, strengths outweighed weaknesses, indicating a mainly good quality of provision. Supplier organisations that provide good quality vocational training use training methods that are well matched to the needs of the trainees; provide effective workplace training; develop good leadership, management arrangements and suitable quality assurance systems; and ensure high standards of achievement by the trainees. It is unsatisfactory that one-third of the supplier organisations inspected demonstrate significant weaknesses, or weaknesses that outweigh strengths, in vocational training. Areas for improvement include the narrow range of learning experiences for the trainees; unsatisfactory work placements; the lack of suitable assessment arrangements; ineffective quality assurance procedures; and low standards of achievement.

3.122   Recurring issues from recent inspections of key skills include the over-emphasis on assessment rather than on the development of the key skills; the ineffective use of initial assessment to inform the trainees' individual training plans; and the insufficient opportunities for the key skills to be developed and assessed in the workplace. Supplier organisations need to devise suitable development

plans to address these issues effectively over the next two years. Inspection also shows that the levels of achievement in the key skills of application of number, communication, and information technology have improved over the last two years in the majority of supplier organisations. For a small minority, the levels of achievement in the key skills are excellent, with almost all trainees achieving the required key skills in the Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

3.123   From September 2002 to June 2004, eight inspections of supplier organisations providing New Deal programmes were carried out; in all cases, strengths outweighed weaknesses. While the quality of the New Deal providers is at least satisfactory, none of the supplier organisations inspected provides high quality programmes for the trainees. Over the four years up to June 2004, there has been no significant improvement in the quality of provision of New Deal programmes by supplier organisations. Areas for improvement in training continue, and need to be addressed effectively if the quality is to improve and excellence is to be achieved.

What are the standards and outcomes achieved by supplier organisations?

3.124   Over the past two years, inspection of Jobskills has demonstrated the wide variation in the performance of supplier organisations. Approximately two-thirds achieve at least satisfactory retention and achievement rates at over 70%; some 10% have excellent rates of retention and achievement at over 90%. In contrast, one in every three providers of Jobskills programmes continues to have poor rates of retention and achievement of NVQs below 60%; one in five falls below 30%.

3.125   Since 2002, approximately 30% of Jobskills trainees left their training programme prematurely; only a minority moved to employment and achieved their target qualification. Most trainees who completed their training programmes achieved their NVQ target qualification and the majority progressed to employment, or the next stage of their Jobskills training programme. The proportion of trainees achieving their target qualification has not improved over the last two years; approximately 55% of trainees achieve their NVQs. Supplier organisations still need to address in their

development plans those trainees who do not complete their training programmes and do not progress to employment.

3.126   Access programmes are aimed at young people who have poor levels of achievement in communications and numeracy, or other barriers to training such as disability or behavioural problems. The proportion of these trainees completing successfully their Jobskills Access training programme and achieving their NVQ has remained low at 45%. Average retention rates on the Access programme are also low, though there has been an improvement from 60% in 2001 to 65% in 2003. Although statistics are not yet available for 2003-2004, inspection evidence indicates that this improvement is continuing. Approximately 16% of trainees leave the Access programme for employment, and 20% to unemployment. It is unsatisfactory that the majority of trainees on Access programmes do not move to the Traineeship programme, the next stage in their training.

3.127   The Access provision has been reviewed by DEL in response to the poor findings highlighted during inspection. As a result, a prevocational Access programme was piloted in 2002-2003 for those trainees with multiple barriers to learning who had left their Access programme prematurely. These trainees had a poor attitude to training and employment, and were frequently dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs. They were provided with an enhanced programme of personal development in four supplier organisations with good records of achievement with trainees on Access programmes. As a result, the majority of these trainees continued with their Access programme and demonstrated improved attitudes to employment. A significant minority, however, left the pilot programme. The programme has been evaluated and revised and has been extended to 13 supplier organisations.

3.128   The overall performance of trainees leaving Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship programmes has remained constant over the past two years; approximately 50% successfully completed their training programme. Only 25% of the trainees who successfully completed the Traineeship programme progressed to a Modern Apprenticeship programme; approximately 33% progressed to employment, while 20% left to

unemployment. The destination of most of the remainder is unknown. In contrast, just over 70% of trainees who completed the Modern Apprenticeship programme progressed to employment; approximately 10% left to unemployment and the destination of most of the remainder is unknown. While the performance of Jobskills Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship programmes compares favourably with similar programmes in England and Wales, a significant minority of supplier organisations need to identify and implement strategies to improve retention rates and reduce the significant minority of trainees who do not complete successfully their training programmes and progress to employment.

3.129   The proportion of leavers progressing from New Deal to employment has remained low over the past three years. On the programme for 18 to 24 year olds, progression has decreased from 28% in 2001 to 22% in 2004. Over the same period, the progression for adults over 25 has decreased from 17% to 16%. Although progression to employment from New Deal is low, the findings from inspection demonstrate that the majority of trainees improve their confidence and employability after completing one of the options provided by the supplier organisations.

What are the recurrent areas for improvement in training and learning?

3.130   In the inspections of training and employment programmes undertaken over the period 2002-2004, the same areas for improvement identified between 2000-2002 continued to be reported. The main recurrent areas for improvement are:

- ◗ the poor initial assessment of trainee's abilities, interests and prior achievements;

- ◗ the inadequate careers guidance;

- ◗ the lack of suitable training programmes for trainees in workplace training;

- ◗ the lack of employer involvement in planning the workplace training and assessing the trainees' achievements;

- ◗ the poor quality work placements which do not provide the range of experiences

needed to meet the requirements of the training programme;

◗ the deficiencies in the directed training, which is aimed at developing the knowledge relevant to the trainee's target qualification;

◗ the poor planning, development and management of key and essential skills;

◗ the poor leadership and management leading to ineffective quality assurance arrangements and self-assessment procedures;

◗ the deficiencies in accommodation and resources;

◗ the poor retention and success rates.

Which support arrangements are available to supplier organisations to address areas for improvement in training?

3.131   There are no effective support arrangements available to supplier organisations to help them address areas for improvement in training. The new inspection arrangements require supplier organisations to produce a revised development plan within 13 weeks of an inspection to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. Although responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the supplier organisations, a significant minority do not have sufficient expertise or resources to devise and implement plans to address effectively the issues identified in inspection. Without suitable external post-inspection support services, current areas for improvement and unsatisfactory standards in training will persist. Follow-up inspections and other measures will not be fully effective in improving the quality of training until supplier organisations have access to good advice, guidance and support to help them address their areas for improvement.

Is good practice identified and disseminated across the training sector?

3.132   Through workshops and seminars since 2002, DEL has begun to disseminate the best practice identified during inspections across the training sector. As a result, supplier organisations

are beginning to have a clearer understanding of what has to be done to improve their training and to achieve excellence. To support further the dissemination of good practice, and improve training, new arrangements need to be established by DEL. Such measures might include best practice seminars, case studies, and a web site, and the establishment of centres of excellence.

3.133   Recent self-evaluation reports produced by supplier organisations show that they are beginning to use inspection reports - which identify the characteristics of high quality training - as a benchmark against which they can measure their own performance. This practice, if associated with the new arrangements suggested above for the dissemination of good practice, should ensure that the features of high quality training are shared effectively throughout the training sector.

How effective is self-evaluation in training?

3.134   All supplier organisations are now required by DEL to use the quality indicators in the Inspectorate's revised IQ:RS document to self-evaluate their training and employment programmes, produce an annual development plan, and submit these to DEL. Almost all did so for the year April 2003 to March 2004. Over the past two years, the new IQ:RS criteria have been used by the Inspectorate to evaluate all training and employment programmes. The Inspectorate's findings, and the supplier organisations' self-evaluation of training and employment schemes, are now based on common quality standards.

3.135   The evidence from inspection shows that approximately 70% of supplier organisations carried out an effective self-evaluation of their Jobskills provision; the comparable figure for New Deal is 60%. The self-evaluation reports from the remaining organisations lack rigour, do not identify adequately strengths and areas for improvement, and do not identify appropriate action that needs to be taken. In these reports, too much emphasis is given to description rather than to evaluation. Further support is required to assist these organisations to develop effective quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures based on the quality indicators in IQ:RS.

How effective is leadership and management in training?

3.136   The quality of leadership and management is good in a majority of the supplier organisations. Roles and responsibilities are defined clearly and communication is effective at all levels. Staff are highly motivated, have a professional approach to their work, are qualified appropriately to modern industry standards, and quality assurance procedures are an integral part of planning. In the remaining supplier organisations, leadership and management are weak and suitable quality assurance processes have not been established. As a result, areas for improvement are not identified and the quality of training provided is not good enough.

Special Education

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Introduction

3.137   Some 50,645 (or 15%) of school-aged children in Northern Ireland are considered by their schools to have special educational needs. Of this number, 10,985 have been statemented - a rise of 659 new statements during 2002-2003. Currently, some 60% of statemented children remain within mainstream schools, including units; this proportion has increased steadily in recent years and is now more than double that of ten years ago. An increasing number of pupils are being identified at an earlier stage; for example, almost 7% of the pre-school population are recognised as requiring additional support with their learning.

3.138   The demand for educational psychology assessment is rising also, as is the expenditure on special education. In 2003-2004, the last year for which full figures are available, total ELB expenditure on special educational needs was £148m, including £82m for special schools and £43m to meet the additional costs of statemented pupils in mainstream schools and units. Increasingly, special education requires effective management and accountability arrangements, and is a major area for development within the mainstream sector.

3.139   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002 called for a strategic approach to resolve the varied quality of special needs provision across the sectors. As a consequence, and to inform future policy and provision, the Inspectorate has been working with DE and DEL to review the effectiveness of current provision in special education, transition, and inclusion.

3.140   Since 2002, the Inspectorate has carried out a number of surveys into inclusion and collaborative working to guide DE's policy development and to report on the action required to assist schools to raise standards. The Inspectorate also undertook an inspection of a number of special schools to evaluate the quality of provision and to determine how the needs of individual pupils are being met. The inspections also focused on the extent to which the special schools have developed their role as providers of specialist advice and support to mainstream schools.

3.141   Since 2002, there have been important improvements in the provision made for special educational needs across all sectors but the overall quality remains variable. Continuing gaps in provision represent a significant problem for all providers, and for the ELBs, DE and DEL. The major challenges within the sector are to define more precisely special needs within the Code of Practice, and in a context in which inclusion is increasingly emphasised; to determine the contribution of special schools to support pupils within and without mainstream education; and to ensure that mainstream schools focus more effectively on special needs by providing appropriate physical access, by developing social inclusion policies, and by meeting the needs of vulnerable and minority groups.

What are the main strengths in special education?

The main strengths are:

◗   the increase in commitment to special educational needs in mainstream schools;

◗   the greater attention given to assessment and to the planning of programmes for individual pupils;

◗   the development of the special school sector as a support for mainstream schools, particularly through outreach provision and short-term placement;

◗   the better quality of support and resources from the ELBs, notably from the psychology and educational welfare services;

◗   the developing emphasis on strategic thinking by all of the ELBs, and the allocation of funding by DE to support consistency of practice in special education; and

◗   the funding from DE to meet the needs of pupils with autism and dyslexia.

## What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗ the need to develop further a sound strategic base to ensure commonality and consistency of practice in special educational needs;

◗ the need for schools and early years providers to raise standards in special needs teaching and outcomes, promote consistency of practice, and improve the role of the SENCO;

◗ the evaluation of provision and outcomes in mainstream schools;

◗ the need to identify suitable training programmes to provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to respond appropriately to the increasing number of pupils entering mainstream schools with special educational and social needs;

◗ the need to place more emphasis on the sharing of best practice within and across sectors; and

◗ current funding arrangements, given the increasing demand for specialist support for more complex and challenging needs, and to support the cost of inclusion.

Figure 34: Overview of special schools

3.142   In 2003-2004, the Inspectorate carried out a survey of mainstream and special schools focusing on the challenges they face in responding to pupils with statements of special educational need. The survey involved the observation of pupils in 47 schools, interviews with principals and the SENCOs in the schools visited, and consideration of documentary and planning evidence. The survey also took account of the responses to a questionnaire completed by 125 schools across the five ELBs, together with the outcomes of consultation with parents. Evidence from the survey indicates that insufficient attention is given by the schools to developing policy and practice in respect of pupils with statements of special educational need. In addition, the wide variety of approaches to special educational needs across the ELBs, and across the schools generally, highlights the need for a common policy that respects regional diversity and differing opinions. The role of the SENCO, a vital element in responding to special educational needs within mainstream schools, has not been developed adequately to meet current legislative priorities. Much remains to be done if current provision is to meet effectively the educational and social inclusion implications inherent in the forthcoming Special Educational Needs and Disability Order.

3.143   The evidence from the survey also shows that individual pupils with statements have a positive experience in those schools where there is a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils, where the SENCO has high status and relevant experience, where good links have been established with ELB advisory officers for special educational needs and other ELB support services, and where there is good leadership at all levels to support inclusion and encourage the active involvement of parents. The key challenge facing all providers is to ensure that provision for pupils with special educational needs is made available at an early stage, and that is not dependent upon a statementing process which is currently resource-driven and overly bureaucratic.

3.144   The survey also identified best practice in the special school sector and the contribution special schools could make in the future in a context where increasing numbers of pupils with special needs are included in mainstream schools. The findings demonstrate that special schools wish to be a part
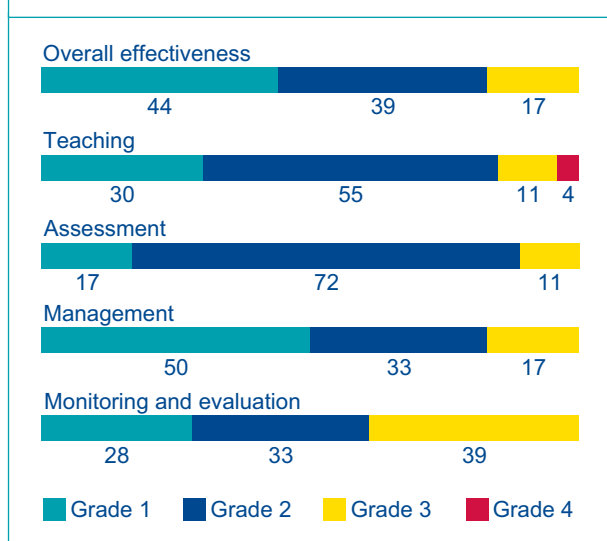
of, and not apart from, mainstream education, have much to offer in outreach support and expertise, and have the potential to develop further their support for pre-school centres, mainstream schools and FE. They have already established good working relationships with mainstream schools and offer support through specialist advice, or through outreach support. Despite these developments, more needs to be done in mainstream schools to place inclusive practice at the core of their work.

3.145   In addition to surveying the provision made in mainstream schools for the inclusion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, the Inspectorate also carried out surveys of the inclusion of Traveller children into mainstream education; the role of special schools in Northern Ireland; the appropriateness of the arrangements for those leaving special schools; and the provision made for pupils with severe learning difficulties and persistent and challenging behaviours in special schools in Northern Ireland.

3.146   Although all of the teacher education institutions favour, in principle, an increase in the time allocated to special education within their programmes, there remains the issue of how best to achieve this. Consequently, in 2004, the Inspectorate carried out a survey to determine the emphasis given to special education in initial teacher education in Northern Ireland. The findings demonstrate that the attention given to special education is uneven. A special education module should be developed, as a mandatory part of the training programme, to help newly qualified teachers address the increasingly diverse needs of pupils in mainstream schools.

Provision in Special Schools for Pupils with Challenging Behaviour

3.147   The findings of the Survey of Challenging Behaviours in schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties received wide support from the special schools. The survey concluded that approximately 14% of the pupils in these schools have severe learning difficulties and persistent and challenging behaviours and drew attention to a small minority whose behaviours are so complex that current interventions do not meet their needs. In response, DE has allocated additional funding to the ELBs to

develop a programme of appropriate action to meet the recommendations of the survey.

Provision for School Leavers in Special Schools

3.148   The transition of pupils from special schools to post-school provision represents a significant milestone and period of change for the young leavers and their families. This survey provided information and advice on the effectiveness of transition and made recommendations to improve the quality and range of provision. The findings indicate that a majority of the young people transfer with little difficulty to adult services, FE, training, or to the world of work. The findings also highlight the need for more consistency of provision across all of the ELBs, and the need to improve transition arrangements for a minority of the young people.

Supporting Pupils with Autism and Dyslexia

3.149   The dyslexia and autism reports of 2002 (prepared jointly with officials from the Republic of Ireland) identified clearly the needs of young people with autism and dyslexia and suggested a programme of action for DE to take forward. Currently, DE is following up the recommendations to improve all aspects of the service. The ELBs have prioritised the recommendations made in the report on autism and, with additional significant funding from DE, have established an Inter-Board Autistic Spectrum Disorder Training Group which has already identified key areas of work to develop effective early years provision and training.

Promoting the Inclusion of Traveller children in Mainstream Education

3.150   The Inspectorate's survey in 2004 of provision for the inclusion of Traveller children within mainstream education, found that the ELBs have well-structured and effective criteria to support such children; in a majority of the schools visited, there are appropriate arrangements to meet their needs. The survey also identified several areas for improvement, including the need for Traveller support groups to meet more regularly; to ensure that data is used to track the progress and attainment of

Traveller children; and that the current level of funding is kept under review.

Educational Welfare Provision: future developments

3.151   In 2002, the Inspectorate carried out a major survey of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS); key areas of policy and areas for improvement were identified. There has been a positive response to the issues raised and a number of important actions have followed. The creation of an inter-board EWS database, and the priority given to Looked After Children, are some of the improvements which have followed. These changes are helping the development of improved working partnerships across the ELBs and the EWS, and more inclusive and effective practice.

Evidence from other inspection activity, and issues arising

3.152   Between 2002 and 2004, inspections were carried out in 15 special schools, focusing on the extent to which provision met the pupils' individual needs, and on the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection. The Inspectorate also supported the inspection of educational provision in seven hospitals, and reports were issued to inform practice and promote improvement. During this period, inspection in the special schools sector has also included a greater emphasis on self-evaluation.

3.153   The evidence from the inspections indicates that provision is mostly satisfactory or better; some 30% of the lessons observed had significant strengths. Improvements in the outreach services provided by those schools with pupils of moderate learning difficulties are especially evident and represent a significant strength. The Inspectorate found, for example, that a combination of outreach support for individual pupils and teachers is helping to develop special education in mainstream schools and to promote inclusion. The key factor in helping the pupils to engage with learning is the high quality of the relationships in the special schools. In most lessons, the teachers provide individual pupils with good levels of support. There is, however, a minority of the teaching which needs to improve if consistency of practice is to be achieved. Leadership and management are mostly good; in a minority of the schools, there are more weaknesses than strengths in the standard of management.

3.154   The Inspectorate's survey of classroom assistants in 2004 raises a number of important issues, particularly the extent to which classroom assistants are used; the criteria used in their deployment; the resource implications, including training needs; and the management of classroom assistants, especially where large numbers are employed. The role of classroom assistants, their deployment and management, need to be addressed more systematically to ensure that they are fully and effectively utilised.

3.155   The Inspectorate has provided advice to DE in relation to the establishment of a rationale and proposed way forward for a counselling service for the education system in Northern Ireland. To achieve these objectives, an overarching strategy, including guidelines and standards, needs to be developed. Counselling services receive limited resources and there has been little progress towards the development of a unitary or board-based system. Good work within the ELBs has taken place, but there is little evidence of a consistent approach. It will be important that counselling develops as a vital aspect of social and educational support for those children and young people whose needs cannot be met by the services currently available to schools and colleges.

Issues arising

3.156   The evidence from the above surveys highlights three main issues. Firstly, it confirms that special educational needs is an area of particular interest and concern to the schools and to the ELBs, and that its management creates quite different challenges for both, not least because of the increasingly complex arrangements made for funding. Secondly, the evidence highlights a varied pattern of provision reflecting different views of special education and of priorities; commonly in Northern Ireland, inclusion is viewed largely as the transfer of pupils from special schools to mainstream and as such represents a much narrower interpretation of special educational needs than is reflected in England and Wales. Thirdly, as the role of special schools changes, further attention needs

to be given to developing the important role they should play in assisting mainstream schools address the issue of inclusion.

3.157   The overall findings from inspection indicate that, while much of the work of the special school sector is of a sound or better quality, more needs to be done to improve services further, and to develop a more effective and inclusive system for children and young people with special educational needs.

Alternative Education Provision

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION (AEP)

Introduction

3.158   The Chief Inspector's report for 1999-2002 noted that AEP had evolved in a largely unplanned manner and that improved strategic direction was a core priority for action. Since 2002, the Inspectorate has been involved in providing advice to DE on the development of a strategic policy for alternative education and, to support this work, has gathered evidence on provision for those pupils educated outside school. Since 2002, in addition to district and follow-up visits, inspections were carried out in ten AEP centres, and meetings were held with ELB personnel responsible for the management of out-of-school educational provision. The evidence from the inspections indicates that most of the provision is of a satisfactory or better quality.

What are the main strengths of AEP?

The main strengths are:

◗   the good quality of the relationships and the manner in which adult and peer mentoring is used increasingly and successfully;

◗   the teaching methods, especially individualised approaches, and the improved use of alternative therapies;

◗   the experience staff bring to their work and their non-judgemental attitudes;

◗   effective management and behaviour systems, including target-setting;

◗   flexible approaches to curriculum development, especially in the areas of vocational education and practical learning;

◗   the increasing priority given to accreditation and achievement;

◗   the intervention strategies used to de-escalate difficult or sensitive situations;

◗   the involvement of a range of professional services;

◗   the progress made by the organisations inspected during 2002-2004;

◗   the involvement of sympathetic and supportive employers;

◗   the clear leadership provided by senior managers; and

◗   the increased community involvement.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗   more effective assessment of the young people's abilities and needs through better information from their former schools, and from other services;

◗   tracking the progress of the young people after they leave AEP to determine the extent to which their experiences within AEP have been beneficial;

◗   staff training to promote further curriculum development, enhance teaching and learning, and improve the young people's levels of attainment;

◗   developing improved links with schools whose pupils enter the AEP system; and

◗   implementing self-evaluation procedures, and developing centres of excellence.

In mainstream schools, the main areas for improvement are:

◗   responding more effectively to young people marginalised by, or at risk of becoming marginalised by, current provision; and

◗   improving the capacity of the schools to meet more effectively the needs of marginalised pupils at risk of suspension and expulsion.

Figure 35: Overview of alternative education provision

Overall effectiveness

| 22 | 61 | 11 | 6 |

Grade 1   Grade 2   Grade 3   Grade 4
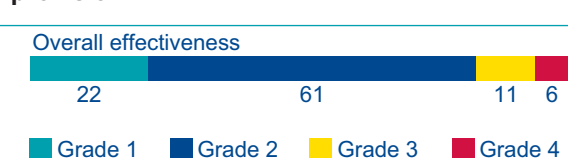
A Changing Picture

3.159   Evidence from inspection since 2002 indicates that, while increasing numbers of pupils are referred to AEP (and more boys than girls), ELB referral systems have improved and intervention is more effectively matched to provision. The management of AEP has also improved as the ELBs assume greater responsibility for the service. Overall planning is improving, reflecting the increased priority given to this area of work, and the appointment of effective managers is also having a positive effect on the co-ordination of AEP within and across the ELBs. Furthermore, examples of effective inter-agency work are increasingly common. Involvement in crime and drugs abuse, and their associated social difficulties, characterise many of the young people dropping out of school, or being expelled. Within AEP, the number of young people with emotional conditions, and those who are "Looked After Children", give cause for concern.

3.160   Much remains to be done to address several current key areas for improvement. In particular, DE needs to develop an inclusive approach to AEP that addresses the current variable levels of accommodation, resources and funding. Furthermore, as AEP becomes more established, its strengths need to be shared with, and assimilated into, mainstream schools to ensure that the provision made for marginalised and challenging young people improves through the development of more socially inclusive and effective practices.

The Youth Service

THE YOUTH SERVICE

Introduction

3.161   The Department of Education is charged with providing funding for the Youth Service that encompasses the controlled and voluntary sectors. The work of the service is centred on "those organisations and projects whose primary purpose is the personal and social development of children, young people and young adults." The voluntary sector comprises some 2,200 uniformed, church and community organisations, that is, the vast majority of youth groups in Northern Ireland. The ELBs provide some financial support to the voluntary sector; within the controlled sector, they make provision for some 130 youth clubs and 14 residential centres.

3.162   The present policy for the youth service was introduced in 1987 by DE and established a target age range of 5 to 25 years. In 1999, the age range was extended to include 4 year olds. An estimated 33%, or 183,000 young people, are involved with the service. In 2002-2003, the number of full-time youth workers employed in controlled or voluntary clubs was just under 200; some 1,800 part-time workers were also involved, and the number of volunteers was just under 20,000.

3.163   During 2002 to 2004, the Inspectorate carried out inspections of youth centres, youth projects, and out-door education centres; reports were also published on centres employing full-time leaders. In addition, the Inspectorate received requests from voluntary and statutory agencies for quality assurance inspections of particular projects. As part of the Inspectorate's commitment to promoting improvement, a follow-up survey on Personal Safety and Child Protection was undertaken in a sample of youth organisations to review the progress made on issues identified in the original survey in 2000. From 2000 to 2004, the Inspectorate was also engaged in a process to promote self-evaluation and improvement throughout the service.

What are the main strengths of the Youth Service?

The main strengths are:

◗   the caring and supportive ethos in which the young people are listened to and valued;

◗   the good quality of relationships amongst the young people, volunteers and youth workers;

◗   the sense of enjoyment shared by the young people and their leaders;

◗   the commitment of many full and part-time youth workers to implementing a programme based firmly on the core principles of youth work;

◗   the interest and commitment of the significant numbers of volunteers who support youth work across a broad range of organisations and groups;

◗   the significant contribution which youth work makes to developing the skills of leadership and team work amongst young people;

◗   the manner in which the young people are encouraged to have confidence in themselves and to respect others;

◗   the good attention given to ensuring the care and well being of children and young people;

◗   the ability of staff to adopt a flexible approach to informal education, and their increasing involvement in the formal curriculum through personal and social education, citizenship, health education, and confidence-building programmes; and

◗   the good quality of the programmes for outdoor education.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗ developing a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of youth work and its outcomes;

◗ recognising, measuring and recording the young people's achievements;

◗ establishing supervision and support structures to enable staff to develop fully their potential;

◗ developing a consistent approach to child protection across the voluntary, controlled and community sectors;

◗ implementing a strategic plan, adequately resourced, to facilitate the development of ICT in the youth sector;

◗ providing more opportunities for the views of young people to be considered when programmes are being planned; and

◗ providing better accommodation, security systems and storage facilities.

How good is the ethos in the Youth sector?

3.164   In all inspection work in the Youth Sector, the Inspectorate encourages management and leaders to develop a culture of self-evaluation, to recognise good quality practice and, where necessary, to identify areas for improvement. The Inspectorate introduced new procedures for the inspection of child protection arrangements within the youth sector in 2002. In the main, inspection evidence shows that the parents and members are strongly supportive of the youth groups and acknowledge the commitment of the leaders. In all of the organisations inspected since 2002, the positive and supportive ethos was a particular strength. Youth workers and volunteers give time to forming sound relationships with the young people, show an understanding of the issues affecting them and, where necessary, challenge constructively their behaviour and attitudes. The good relationships between youth workers and the young people provide a sound basis for the personal and social

development of the members of the various groups and organisations.

How good is the practice in Youth work?

3.165   In the best practice, the youth workers have devised programmes that address personal and social education, promote the core principles of participation, awareness and understanding of others, and develop appropriate values and beliefs. In planning their work, the youth workers provide a varied programme of activities, often designed to build the young people's capacity to consider risk, make informed decisions, and take control in particular situations. The youth workers encourage a positive atmosphere which helps the young people develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships and develop new skills.

3.166   The inspection of the out-door education centres provided evidence of positive outcomes for the young people in terms of the development of their physical skills, their personal and social development, and their enjoyment. The centres give a high priority to pastoral care, health and safety and effective risk assessment, and offer a broad range of worthwhile experiences. The effective planning, good teaching methods employed, and the flexible approaches of the co-ordinators and instructors in the outdoor education centres, are additional positive features.

3.167   In about half of the youth centres inspected, the standard of youth work is very good; on a few occasions, it is excellent. In about one-third of the centres, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. In a small number of the centres, there are significant areas for improvement. In a minority, the work of the trained youth workers falls short of an acceptable standard and there are deficiencies in the programmes offered, and in the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes for the young people. In a significant minority of the youth centres inspected, the young people's achievements are not recorded in a systematic manner, and staff development programmes are in need of improvement.

What standards do the young people achieve?

3.168   Inspection evidence shows that the children and young people have opportunities to interact with their peers and adults, broaden their experiences, gain self-esteem and self-confidence, understand the importance of responsible citizenship, and learn through enjoyable and appropriate activities. The young people participate voluntarily and enthusiastically in a wide range of programmes and often speak highly of the quality of their experiences and of their enjoyment of the activities. They appreciate the opportunities to develop skills and interests through active involvement in group activities, and to gain knowledge and understanding of important issues that affect their lives. They often learn how to make use of support services and information, and develop planning, organisational and teamwork skills relevant to everyday life and employment. A key strength of youth work in Northern Ireland is the way in which the programmes often reflect the need to raise awareness and understanding of health-related issues; for example, in one centre, the members designed and launched a campaign to raise awareness of issues surrounding the mental health and well being of young people.

3.169   Evidence from inspection also indicates that there is a need for the young people's achievements to be recognised, celebrated and recorded in a more consistent manner. Some particularly effective practice in cross-community activities and in international travel and exchange was noted in a number of the organisations.

How effective are pastoral care and child protection arrangements?

3.170   In a significant minority of the inspections, child protection and personal safety issues were identified, particularly the need to inform members and their parents about child protection procedures. There were also some concerns about the safety and security of members and leaders. The vetting procedures for paid staff were found to be good, but there is a need for the vetting procedures for those who work on a voluntary basis within the sector to be more clearly understood and monitored more rigorously by management. As a result of evidence obtained during a follow-up survey of personal safety and child protection, the Inspectorate has recommended to DE the need for a consistent approach to child protection across the voluntary, controlled and community sectors.

How good are management and leadership?

3.171   In a small number of the centres, where there are particular weaknesses in practice, the management is unaware of difficulties, or has not acted quickly enough to introduce adequate monitoring procedures. In general, there is a need for managers to have a more rigorous approach to planning and monitoring the centres for which they have responsibility. Despite increased attention in recent years, the monitoring and evaluation of youth work require further substantial attention if the necessary improvements are to be made in management procedures within the sector.

3.172   In some examples of particularly good practice, the management arrangements are very supportive of the youth workers and reflect the complex nature of the governance of youth groups and organisations. Despite this, there is a need for the management committees of voluntary groups to review their management arrangements to ensure that the highest standards and the personal safety of young people are maintained. There is also a need for more effective staff supervision and support structures to enable full and part-time staff to develop their potential, and a need for appropriate training for those who are experiencing difficulties in their work.

3.173   The need to remedy deficiencies in accommodation and resources, and to promote the more purposeful use of ICT, were noted as issues in the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002; these matters still require attention. The need for improvements in accommodation has been highlighted in recent inspections. There is also an urgent need for action by DE to devise a strategic plan, adequately resourced, to develop ICT in the sector. In about half of the inspections, health and safety concerns were identified; in a few cases, the concerns are of a serious nature and involve health and safety deficiencies.

Other key considerations

3.174   The findings from inspection show that the quality of youth work is varied and there is a lack of effective procedures to disseminate and learn from the practice of others. Recently, the youth sector has become more open to self-evaluation and some good practice is emerging. Despite this, monitoring and evaluation does not often inform adequately the planning and practice.

3.175   There are significant pressures on youth workers, particularly in areas of social and economic deprivation, and in areas where there are continuing community tensions. In some areas, the youth organisations and centres provide a safe environment for young people to meet where, in an atmosphere of trust and respect, they can discuss issues which affect their lives. The high levels of aggressive behaviour, particularly among young males, which was also identified in the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002, remain a concern and place particular demands on workers in some sections of the service. In some areas, it is reported that increasing numbers of young people are presenting with serious personal or emotional problems.

3.176   The level of funding from central government, combined with the short-term funding of specific initiatives, continue to inhibit the development of sound strategic planning within the youth service. There are problems of sustainability in short-term funded projects; when targets have been met and evidence has been provided that particular projects are making a positive impact on the lives of young people, it is frustrating for all involved if the project comes to an abrupt end. The findings from the inspection of outdoor education centres have also highlighted the need for a strategic review by DE of outdoor education. In particular, there is a need to ensure that there are adequate resources to support the development of the centres.

3.177   Much good work is carried out in the youth sector and, from 2002 to 2004, the vast majority of youth leaders, part-time workers and volunteers have continued to provide a particularly valuable service to young people. The success of much of this work depends on a small number of full and part-time youth workers, and on significant numbers of volunteers who give freely of their time. It is to the credit of all involved that so much is achieved by a service that receives a small percentage of the overall education budget.

Initial Teacher Education

INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)

Introduction

3.178   There have been important developments in teacher education since the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002. The recently established General Teaching Council (NI) is playing an increasingly important role in the professional development of all teachers. At a conference in April 2003, DE and DEL, in consultation with a wide range of teacher education interests, instituted a review of aspects of teacher education in Northern Ireland; a report will follow in the autumn of 2005.

3.179   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002 drew attention to a number of recurrent issues, including special educational needs, and the role of education in preparing young people to live in a diverse and divided society. As part of its work to promote improvement, the Inspectorate reviewed the place of special education within the courses provided by the five ITE providers in Northern Ireland. As noted above in the report on special education, the findings indicated that, while there are elements of good practice across all the higher education institutions (HEIs), all ITE courses should contain a mandatory special educational needs module. The student teachers who opted for the courses in special needs reported that they had gained much and believed that they were better prepared to teach children with such needs.

What are the main strengths of teacher education?

The main strengths are:

◗   in most schools, the effectiveness of induction programmes for beginning teachers employed on a permanent or temporary basis;

◗   the good quality of much of the in-school support for beginning teachers on induction, and during Early Professional Development (EPD);

◗   the satisfactory or better quality of the majority of the beginning teachers' professional development activities in EPD;

◗   the sound progress made by most of the beginning teachers;

◗   the good quality of the support provided for beginning teachers by the Curriculum, Advisory and Support Services (CASS); and

◗   the positive action taken by the HEIs to increase the focus on special educational needs.

What are the main areas for improvement?

The main areas for improvement are:

◗   strengthening the partnership arrangements across the three phases of early teacher education;

◗   improving the transitions between ITE and induction, and between induction and EPD;

◗   providing co-ordinated on-line support for beginning teachers;

◗   providing beginning teachers with sufficient time for professional development;

◗   ensuring that beginning teachers on short or part-time contracts, or without employment, have access to support in their professional development;

◗   setting appropriate time limits for the completion of induction;

◗   redesigning the EPD process to give the beginning teachers greater flexibility to demonstrate the growth in their professional competence;

◗   introducing a Professional Development Portfolio for all beginning teachers;

◗   devising effective quality assurance systems to ensure that the arrangements for induction and EPD are rigorous, fair and consistent; and

◗   establishing procedures to obtain data about induction and EPD.

The induction and EPD of beginning teachers

3.180   The survey of the induction and EPD of beginning teachers was the major focus of the Inspectorate's work in teacher education during 2002-2004. The survey evaluated the effectiveness of the transition from ITE to induction; the quality and effectiveness of the support provided in schools and by the support services of the ELBs; the suitability and effectiveness of the arrangements for EPD, and the extent to which all of these procedures are implemented in a consistent and rigorous manner.

How effective is the transition from ITE to induction and from induction to EPD?

3.181   Most school principals ensure there are structured induction programmes that introduce the beginning teachers to their schools and promote their professional development. CASS provides good support for the beginning teachers as they enter induction. In those schools where they hold permanent or extended temporary posts, there is effective continuity between induction and EPD; good use is made of the beginning teachers' end of induction reports and induction portfolios to identify the focus of their EPD. There is often a lack of continuity when a beginning teacher completes induction in one school before moving to another for EPD. In a majority of these circumstances, insufficient use is made of the beginning teachers' end of induction reports to identify priorities for their EPD.

3.182   The beginning teachers leave ITE with a Career Entry Profile. Its purpose is to help integrate the initial stage of teacher education with induction. In the best practice, it provides a good focus for discussion between the beginning teacher and the teacher-tutor, and is a sound way to identify the beginning teacher's priorities for development. Despite this, a significant minority of schools and beginning teachers do not make sufficiently constructive use of it and it needs to be revised to ensure that it functions more effectively as a link between ITE and induction.

3.183   The Inspectorate found little or no use of ICT as a medium for the ongoing professional development of beginning teachers during induction

or EPD. There is an urgent need for the teacher education partners to work together to develop appropriate on-line support for beginning teachers, initially through joint pilot work, to develop continuity from the initial and induction phases through to EPD.

How well do schools organise and manage the induction of beginning teachers?

3.184   The arrangements for induction are effective in a majority of the schools. The teacher-tutor, or the member of staff with designated responsibility for beginning teachers, is the key person in the induction of beginning teachers; only a minority have designated time to carry out their responsibilities. They should have time to carry out their responsibilities and to attend in-service training (INSET) to improve their skills in managing induction, and assessing the beginning teachers' progress.

3.185   In most schools, experienced teachers provide good support for the beginning teachers. However, a significant minority are uncertain about the procedures for monitoring and assessing the beginning teachers' progress, especially in relation to teaching competences. Consequently, there is a need for INSET to improve their capacity to support and assess beginning teachers more effectively during induction.

3.186   A majority of schools ensure that the beginning teachers' timetables and duties are reasonable, although this is problematical when there are large numbers of beginning teachers in a school. However, a significant minority of beginning teachers have full timetables. In addition, in some schools, beginning teachers take on significant responsibilities related to examination classes and/or teach a wide range of subjects. The schools and DE need to ensure that beginning teachers do not have timetables that make unreasonable demands and that they have sufficient time to focus on their professional development. The allocation of professional development time for beginning teachers in small primary schools is particularly problematic and requires urgent consideration by the teacher education partners.

3.187   The Inspectorate's survey also identified concerns about beginning teachers on short-term

temporary contracts, working part-time as substitute teachers, or not in employment. These teachers, who make up approximately half of new teachers, are often employed in more than one school during their induction year and a significant number do not have sustained periods of employment. Despite the good efforts of CASS to support these teachers, not all schools act on the guidance in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook for beginning teachers employed in these situations. As a consequence, a minority do not receive consistent and continuous support and experience problems making and demonstrating progress in their induction year. The reluctance of a minority to seek support and guidance from the schools, and to gather evidence of their professional development, adds to their difficulties. Consequently, the teacher education partners and DE need to institute arrangements that ensure the professional development of beginning teachers on short-term contracts, working part-time, or without employment, is equitable, coherent and progressive.

What is the quality of the CASS support for beginning teachers on induction?

3.188   The CASS officers responsible for supporting beginning teachers are strongly committed to their work. In addition to the provision of a wide range of INSET and high quality resources, they provide effective in-school support for beginning teachers and teacher-tutors. The beginning teachers' evaluations indicate that most find INSET support helpful and most schools are satisfied with the quality of CASS support. While there are examples of useful co-operation between the HEIs and CASS, they need to share their expertise and work together more systematically to promote continuity and progression in the beginning teachers' professional development.

How effective are the arrangements for EPD in promoting the beginning teachers' reflective practice?

3.189   The EPD process is most effective when senior and middle managers value it and where schools use self-evaluation as a strategy for improvement. The teacher-tutors continue to play a pivotal role in the organisation and co-ordination of the EPD programme. Currently, INSET for beginning

teachers is heavily weighted to the induction year, with only a limited amount of time allocated to EPD. This arrangement reflects CASS's lead role during induction and has the positive effect of ensuring that the beginning teachers have access to intensive support during induction. However, the current allocation of time militates against CASS providing support for the beginning teachers as they move into the EPD phase.

3.190   The principal component of the EPD programme is the beginning teachers' completion of two Professional Development Activities (PDAs) that focus on specific aspects of their teaching and the pupils' learning to develop reflective practice. A majority are of a satisfactory or better quality; a significant minority are good and some are excellent. A minority lack depth and purpose and focus insufficiently on the pupils' learning. A majority of the beginning teachers have reservations about the value of the PDA; a significant minority find the process bureaucratic and time-consuming, and regard it as a hurdle to be surmounted rather than a positive contribution to their development as teachers.

3.191   To strengthen continuity and progression across the three phases of early teacher education, the teacher education partners should create a beginning teachers' Professional Development Portfolio. This should be maintained from the completion of initial teacher education, contain evidence of professional development during induction and EPD, and provide an effective link between early teacher education and continuing professional development.

To what extent are beginning teachers making progress?

3.192   A majority of the teachers visited during the survey demonstrate the necessary resilience, enthusiasm and commitment to their work and seek advice as required. Over the two years of the survey, most grew in confidence and competence and are making satisfactory or better progress as teachers. Most of the lessons observed are well organised and the teachers seek to match their teaching approaches to the abilities and needs of the pupils. A minority are making slower progress and use a narrow range of teaching approaches that

results in a lower level of pupil participation. Beginning teachers on short-term contracts, or who are working part-time, often have fragmented periods of teaching experience and have difficulty developing and demonstrating their competence as teachers.

To what extent are the arrangements for induction and EPD rigorous and consistent?

3.193   The schools have the responsibility to determine if a beginning teacher has made sufficient progress to achieve induction. Inspection evidence indicates that only a minority of principals and teacher-tutors apply the criteria for judging competence as set out in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook. In a minority of schools, assessment of the beginning teachers' competence is based on inadequate evidence and the criteria for successful or unsuccessful induction are not applied with sufficient rigour. Teacher-tutors, and other teachers who support induction, need to develop an improved understanding of the evidence necessary to determine the successful completion of induction. A significant minority of experienced teachers remain unsure about how best to monitor and evaluate the beginning teachers' progress and some remain reluctant to evaluate their progress through formal class observation.

3.194   There is also a need to develop effective quality assurance procedures to ensure that the arrangements for induction and EPD are equitable, rigorous and consistent and that they result in the highest quality of support for the professional development of beginning teachers. Currently, none of the teacher education partners has the responsibility for quality assurance.

3.195   In Northern Ireland, there is an expectation that beginning teachers will complete induction in one year, with the option of a further term for those who do not meet the requirements at the end of their induction year. These arrangements present difficulties for those on short-term contracts, working part-time, or not in employment. There are currently no reliable statistics on the number of beginning teachers achieving successful induction at the end of their induction year, nor on the time it takes beginning teachers to achieve successful induction. In addition, there is not a rigorous system to track

beginning teachers who continue to work as substitute teachers without completing induction. The GTC (NI), working with the other teacher education partners and with DE, should set appropriate time limits for the completion of induction and establish systems to ensure there are comprehensive and reliable statistics on all aspects of induction and EPD.

3.196   The Inspectorate's survey highlighted the many strengths in the arrangements for induction and, to a lesser extent, EPD. To improve the arrangements for induction and EPD, and to ensure that the support for beginning teachers is of the highest quality, DE and the teacher education partners need to work together to address key areas for improvement. In particular, there is a need to strengthen the teacher education partnership so that beginning teachers benefit from the experience of all of the partners throughout early teacher education. In addition, it is important that the beginning teachers develop a greater sense of responsibility for their professional development during induction and EPD and understand more fully the link between early teacher education and their continuing professional development.

4.   THE INSPECTORATE AND THE PROMOTION OF IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

4.1   Promoting improvement in the interests of all learners is a cornerstone of the work of the Inspectorate. It is also an issue that attracts educational, media, and political attention and comment. There is an increasing expectation that inspection will lead to improvement, and there is considerable political and academic interest in the extent to which that link can be demonstrated.

4.2   Inspection is but one of a range of strategies through which higher standards can be realised. There is no guarantee that improved standards will follow automatically from inspection. Higher standards depend ultimately upon the extent to which those inspected, working with the support agencies, are able to address effectively the areas for improvement identified during an inspection.

4.3   Much less within the influence of the Inspectorate, but central to post-inspection improvement, are those factors that help or constrain an organisation's response to the areas for improvement identified by inspection. Of particular importance is the capacity of senior management to provide the motivation and momentum for change, and so move the organisation forward in a way that offers a real possibility that the issues identified will be addressed successfully, and within an appropriate timescale. This work requires high quality leadership; a commitment to raising standards; an understanding of the strategies capable of bringing about improvement; and access to high quality, credible, external support.

4.4   All of these elements are vital to the realisation of organisational and institutional change, and to the raising of standards. They will not be found in all of the schools, colleges and other organisations inspected but it is for this very reason that the Inspectorate will seek increasingly to comment on their presence, or absence, in its reports, policy advice, and in dissemination.

Does inspection lead to improvement?

4.5   Since 2000, evidence from the inspection of pre-school education shows a steady and significant rise in standards, particularly in the voluntary/private centres.

Figure 36: Improvement in standards in pre-school education 2000-2004		
% Grade 1	**Nursery**	**Voluntary/ Private Centres**
2004	53	50
2002	43	30
2000	36	28

While this rise in standards is attributable to a range of factors, not least the efforts of the staff, the Inspectorate has also contributed to these outcomes as a result of the procedures it uses to assist pre-school centres identify and address important areas for improvement. An initial baseline inspection visit to new pre-school centres is arranged as soon as possible after they have opened, or have been included in the pre-school expansion programme. Although these visits do not result in a written report, the leaders in the centres are informed about the strengths and areas for improvement identified during the visit. The formal inspection, carried out six months to two years later, shows that - in most centres - improvements have been made, sometimes very marked, resulting in more effective learning for the children. The link between inspection and improvement is particularly evident when comparisons are made between the outcomes of the initial inspection and the follow-up inspection.

4.6   In September 2003, to bring about a more explicit link between inspection and improvement, the Inspectorate introduced procedures to strengthen the post-inspection development and action planning process. These include more explicit conclusions to inspection reports to indicate the extent of improvement required, and the urgency of the action needed; increased contact between the Inspectorate, the organisation inspected and the relevant support services; more frequent monitoring by the Inspectorate of the work undertaken by the organisation in the post-inspection phase; and a longer period between the initial inspection and the

follow-up inspection to allow the organisation sufficient time to bring about the necessary improvements.

Follow-up inspections and improvement: emerging patterns

4.7 The extent to which an organisation has responded effectively to the areas identified for improvement is the principal focus of a follow-up inspection. From 2002 to 2004, some 40 follow-up inspections were carried out in pre-school centres; in almost all, improvements had been made by the time the follow-up inspection took place. During the same period, 94 follow-up inspections took place in the primary sector. Good progress was made in some two-thirds of the schools in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the initial inspection. Satisfactory progress was made in one-third, though further work is required in these schools to address effectively all of the areas identified for improvement. In only one school was progress unsatisfactory.

4.8 Furthermore, in 2003-2004, the Inspectorate carried out a pilot project in the primary sector to quantify more precisely the extent to which progress is made in respect of the main areas for improvement identified during the initial inspections. The findings demonstrated that, by the time the follow-up inspections took place, some two-thirds of the issues identified in the initial inspections had been addressed in ways that showed improvement, or significant improvement. Despite these largely successful outcomes, a significant minority of the areas for improvement had not been addressed effectively, including the matching of learning activities to the needs of individual pupils; and the use of unduly limited teaching strategies. The most frequent area for improvement identified in the initial inspections was the provision made for pupils requiring additional support with their learning; over 80% of the schools in the pilot, where this had been identified as an issue, had improved this aspect of their work by the time the follow-up inspection took place.

4.9 Between 2002 and 2004, there were 37 follow-up inspections in post-primary schools. There was good or better improvement in a significant minority and satisfactory or better progress in most; in a minority, there was limited progress. The most

frequent areas for improvement identified in the initial inspections were the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning; the need to broaden the teaching strategies used and improve the standards attained by the pupils; special educational needs; and leadership at all levels, including that of the principal. Improvement came about especially in the development of more effective teaching strategies, and in special educational needs. Limited progress was made in raising standards, and in improving leadership, monitoring and evaluation.

4.10 Inspection and improvement are key features of the SSP, DE's main improvement programme in the primary and post-primary sectors. The schools involved are inspected annually to assess progress. Schools are normally included in the programme for three years, but some remain for longer periods before it is considered that they no longer need the additional support to improve. At the end of the 2003-2004 academic year, of the 30 schools in the SSP programme; 16 were considered to have improved sufficiently to leave it. The number of schools entering the programme has decreased annually; only five were admitted for the 2004-2005 academic year. A follow-up inspection took place in 28 primary schools involved in the SSP; 9 had made good progress and 19 had made satisfactory progress.

4.11 Five post-primary schools are included in the SSP under what is termed Group 1 status to reflect the very challenging circumstances in which they work, that is, in areas of substantial social disadvantage and low educational achievement. These schools receive extensive financial support from DE, substantial advisory help, have the benefit of low pupil-teacher ratios, but are increasingly subject to the adverse effects of demographic decline. The outcomes of the Inspectorate's annual follow-up visits to these schools show improvement in areas including attendance, pupil behaviour, wider curricular opportunities (notably vocational opportunities at KS4) and the quality of teaching. Despite these gains, a majority of the schools have considerable difficulty achieving and sustaining success in GCSE.

4.12 Findings from the 18 follow-up inspections undertaken between 2002 and 2004 in the Training sector indicate that almost all of the organisations

have addressed the issues identified in the initial report and improvement has followed, mainly in staffing, resources, initial assessment, and the arrangements for monitoring and assessing trainees in the workplace. Follow-up inspections in FE show similar patterns. In the follow-up inspections in the Youth sector, there is evidence of significant improvement in the provision made for the young people.

Self-evaluation and inspection: an effective combination?

4.13   To promote improvement through inspection, the Inspectorate also offers primary and post-primary schools the opportunity to participate in a self-evaluative follow-up inspection in which the staff prepare an evaluation of their own progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the initial inspection. Increasingly, schools are opting to undertake this form of inspection. The improving quality and accuracy of self-evaluative reports during 2002 to 2004 testify to the growing ability of the schools to address effectively the issues identified in the initial inspection.

4.14   In addition to promoting self-evaluation as a key part of follow-up inspection, the Inspectorate also promotes self-evaluation within the initial inspection. In 2003-2004, the Inspectorate monitored a group of primary and post-primary schools where the initial inspection included an element of self-evaluation. The findings show that including self-evaluation within inspection results in the schools focusing more systematically on improving teaching, learning and standards, gives staff a degree of ownership of the inspection process, and helps them develop professionally.

4.15   All inspections in FE include an element of self-evaluation. Each self-evaluative report grades provision and outcomes and the Inspectorate then comments on the accuracy of these evaluations. In the main, the self-evaluation reports received do not address sufficiently teaching and learning, and focus too greatly on external achievement.

4.16   Self-evaluation was introduced into training in 2002 when all supplier organisations were required by DEL to use the quality indicators in the revised IQ:RS to evaluate annually their training and employment programmes. In 2003-2004, almost all supplier organisations completed self-evaluation reports and submitted these to DEL; these papers were then evaluated by the Inspectorate. The outcomes indicate that some 70% of supplier organisations had carried out an effective self-evaluation of Jobskills provision compared to 60% of New Deal providers. The reports from the remaining providers are more descriptive than evaluative.

4.17   While post-inspection improvement is attributable to a complex variety of factors, and notably to the leadership in the organisations inspected, the evidence points to a strong correlation between inspection, improvement, and effective self-evaluation. This is not to suggest that more cannot be done to strengthen and improve that link through better methods of inspection, and through the development of more effective working relationships between the Inspectorate, the staff in the organisations inspected, and relevant support agencies.

How does the Inspectorate work with others to promote improvement?

4.18   As part of its programme to involve others and to promote improvement, the Inspectorate recruits lay persons and Associate Assessors (AAs) to take part in inspections. Both groups have contributed considerably to the effectiveness of inspection. The AAs are professional staff recruited, for example, from schools, colleges, training organisations, youth centres, or from CASS. Their experience and expertise bring an additional and valuable dimension to inspection. In turn, they report that they gain as a result of their involvement in inspection by taking back to their own organisations a heightened understanding of effective practice, and greater skills in monitoring and self-evaluation.

4.19   A key part of the Inspectorate's work is to draw upon inspection and other evidence to provide advice to Government, DE, DEL and to DCAL. From 2002 to 2004, for example, the Inspectorate provided advice to DE on a wide range of issues including the Post-Primary Review; the review of the Northern Ireland curriculum; vocational education at KS4; accommodation in schools; the Early Years Enriched Curriculum; and substitute teaching and its

management in Northern Ireland. The Inspectorate has also provided advice to DEL on a wide range of issues including key and essential skills, the ILT strategy for FE, Centres of Excellence, Foundation Degrees, and teacher education. The Inspectorate provides policy advice and guidance to DE, DEL and DCAL on many aspects of Irish-medium education and the Irish language including standards, resources, the development of new schools and units, initial teacher education, and the provision of curriculum and advisory support to the sector.

4.20   The Inspectorate has also worked with various organisations funded by DCAL to take forward the Learning Strategy initiative. This initiative is designed to access new and different audiences, encourage life-long learning and social inclusion, and promote the objectives of the organisations involved, and DCAL's own objectives. The Inspectorate's report on this initiative drew attention to the innovative work carried out by the Library Services of the ELBs, and by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in which the latter, for example, made its archival material available to a wider audience, including schools. The success of the Library Service in developing adult learning, and reaching out to the wider community to meet identified needs, is a particularly good example of sound practice in community education.

5.   KEY RECURRING THEMES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

5.1   This report has drawn attention to the quality of provision in, and the standards achieved by, the education, youth and training sectors. These achievements are due to the high professionalism, commitment and dedication of those who teach or otherwise serve the interests of young people in Northern Ireland.

5.2   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002, while praising the quality of provision and the standards attained, also drew attention to the need for the improvement of a number of important issues, mostly long-standing, some attracting political interest or attention in the media, which have been the subject of adverse comment over time by the Inspectorate. These challenges remain. In general, the findings from inspection since 2002 indicate that limited progress has been made in remedying them. It will be important, if standards in Northern Ireland are to continue to improve, that these issues are addressed.

Special educational needs and adult essential skills: unresolved issues

5.3   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002 noted the concerns expressed about the significant number of young people and adults in Northern Ireland who lack basic competences in literacy and numeracy. The findings from inspection since 2002 show that special education remains a key area for improvement though progress, some of it significant, has been made. Those working in special educational needs and adult essential skills continue to demonstrate substantial commitment to those in their charge, and important gains are made, particularly in improving the self-esteem and self-confidence of those receiving help with their learning. Insufficient attention, however, is given to determining the extent to which this support results in improvements in the literacy and numeracy attainment of those receiving it.

5.4   In the pre-school sector, special needs provision continues to be an area which requires attention. DE has made some progress in improving provision and funding, and there are some examples of good practice involving joint working among voluntary agencies and the health, social services, and education authorities. Despite these developments, the pre-school expansion programme still does not take sufficient account of special educational needs in the voluntary/private centres. There is as yet no clear legislative responsibility for special needs support when a child's pre-school education is not provided by a school, and a coherent approach involving the relevant Departments and other agencies has not yet been secured.

5.5   The findings from inspections in the primary sector since 2002 demonstrate that, in one-fifth of the schools inspected, provision for special educational needs has more weaknesses than strengths, or significant weaknesses. The findings from inspections of post-primary schools suggest that, in a significant minority of the schools, there are more weaknesses than strengths, or significant weaknesses. In a significant minority of post-primary schools, for example, the education plans for those pupils who require special help are insufficiently precise, and are not reflected consistently enough in the everyday work of the subject teachers. These findings indicate that no discernible progress has been made in improving special needs provision and outcomes in the post-primary sector since 2002.

5.6   The consequences of young people leaving school with unresolved literacy and numeracy problems also affect adversely those working in FE and training. The low levels of literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland were highlighted in the International Adult Literacy Survey of 1996, which estimated that 24% of adults experience difficulty with these competences. Evidence from inspection in FE in 2004 shows that the provision made for adults with poor levels of literacy and numeracy is better than it was in 2002, but much remains to be done to bring about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and in the standards achieved by the students.

5.7   In FE generally, the provision made for literacy and numeracy continues to require attention; only 25% is satisfactory or better. The development of literacy and numeracy within vocational courses

also remains poor. Inspection evidence continues to point to the need for improvements in initial assessment and planning for progression; for better teaching strategies to assist learners to improve and to apply their understanding and skills in more practical contexts; and for more detailed monitoring of the progress of individual students.

5.8   In training, for a majority in New Deal, and for a significant minority in Jobskills, the challenges are similar to those in FE. The majority of young people commence and leave training and employment programmes with poor or no qualifications; a significant number also have poor communication and numeracy skills, poor attitudes to training, and learning or behavioural difficulties. These are serious barriers to acquiring qualifications and finding employment. Despite this, evidence from inspection points to insufficient initial analysis of the literacy and numeracy needs of the trainees, and inadequate support.

Aspects of teaching, training and learning: catering more effectively for individual difference, increasing challenge, and improving assessment

5.9   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002, while highlighting the overall good quality of education and training in Northern Ireland, also noted the variations within and across pre-school centres, schools and other educational establishments. In particular, attention was drawn to the need for improvement in catering for individual difference, reducing mundane tasks, and in assessment. Limited progress has been made on these issues since 2002, and, if the quality of teaching and learning in Northern Ireland is to improve further, they need to be addressed more systematically by senior management, and by those who provide in-service training support.

5.10   In pre-school centres, assessment information needs to be used more effectively in planning and in practice to address the requirements of individual children. In primary schools, evidence from inspection shows that further attention is required to cater more effectively for individual difference; to reduce the over-emphasis on whole-class teaching; and increase the challenge in the teaching, especially for the more able children.

5.11   Approximately one-sixth of the lessons observed in post-primary schools since 2002 had more weaknesses than strengths, or significant weaknesses. Areas for improvement include the need to widen the range of teaching and learning strategies; reduce over-direction; provide the pupils with increased opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning; and increase the use of assessment to monitor and improve their progress and attainment. In a minority of the schools, planning and classroom strategies do not take effective account of the pupils' differing abilities.

5.12   Since 2002, inspection evidence from FE also points to the need to improve support for individual students, particularly for the lower attaining; some 30% of the courses provided for these students reflect more weaknesses than strengths. The need for the more effective differentiation of learning continues to be an important area for improvement in FE. There is also a need for more innovative teaching and learning, given the excessive attention to meeting the demands of external assessment.

5.13   There are similar challenges in training. A significant minority of organisations do not have effective assessment arrangements and there is an over-emphasis on assessment procedures rather than on development of the key skills. In 2004, in a survey of essential skills in FE and Training, most tutors carried out an initial assessment of their students' attainment, but a majority did not use the results to influence sufficiently their teaching, and were not well placed to determine the extent to which the students made progress. While most tutors responded well to the learners' written work, their comments frequently lacked the advice necessary to help the students bring about improvement.

Information and communication technology: the need for further improvement

5.14   Since 1997, a well-funded strategy has advanced education technology in Northern Ireland, improved young people's competence in ICT, and developed the professional capabilities of the teachers. Much has been achieved but more is needed.

5.15   In pre-school education, the provision of ICT equipment varies considerably and its use is generally under-developed, especially in the voluntary/private centres. In primary schools, almost all schools are benefiting from the resources provided through the C2k service. In 83% of the primary schools inspected, ICT provision reflects significant strengths, or the strengths outweigh the weaknesses; in the remaining 17%, the weaknesses outweigh the strengths, or there are significant weaknesses. Despite this improving position, for most schools, further efforts are required to integrate ICT more effectively into and across the curriculum, and to increase opportunities for problem-solving, investigative and creative work.

5.16   The position in post-primary schools, while also improving, requires further attention. Evidence from inspection indicates that only a minority of schools integrate ICT successfully into and across the curriculum. As in the primary sector, there is a need to introduce more problem-solving activities, creativity, and challenge, particularly for the more able pupils and/or those with more developed ICT capabilities. In the majority of the schools, there are problems with the quality of teaching and learning in timetabled ICT classes in KS3. The quality of planning for ICT is generally good but, in many schools, it is not translated effectively into improved learning opportunities for the pupils.

5.17   A similar picture emerges from the inspection of ICT in the FE sector. There has been a significant increase in investment in ICT, but this has not yet been exploited sufficiently to benefit the learners, and ICT continues to have a limited impact. Radical changes are required if staff are to adjust their teaching styles to focus more explicitly on developing and guiding learning and training in ICT. This vital shift is still in its earliest stages, and needs more active support from senior management.

5.18   Little use is made of ICT in training to help trainees achieve occupational competence. Only a minority commence their training with suitable ICT skills and they are rarely provided with learning experiences in ICT during their training. In the Youth sector also, there is a continuing need for the development of ICT provision and capabilities.

Leadership and management: the need for greater effectiveness and efficiency

5.19   The Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002 noted the need to strengthen the effectiveness of those with management responsibilities, especially in the use of monitoring and evaluation as a mechanism to bring about improvement. The findings from inspection since 2002 indicate clearly that this area of management continues to require attention.

5.20   The Inspectorate's support materials for self-evaluation in the pre-school sector were launched in 2003-2004; it is too early for evidence of their use to be available. Pre-school centres are generally at an early stage in using self-evaluation to monitor provision and bring about improvement.

5.21   Inspection findings show that, while an increasing number of primary schools are developing a culture of self-evaluation, and more senior management teams have begun to monitor and evaluate classroom practice, this vital aspect of good leadership remains an important area for further development and improvement. In a significant minority of the primary schools inspected since 2002, monitoring and evaluation arrangements reflected more weaknesses than strengths, or significant weaknesses.

5.22   A minority of primary schools monitor and evaluate effectively teaching and learning. In these schools, the teachers have good opportunities to consider the extent to which their teaching meets the needs of all of the children. Assessment data is used well to evaluate progress, and to influence teaching and learning arrangements. In contrast, in a significant minority of the schools, the children's standard of work is not monitored and evaluated effectively. Performance data is not used to help to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and/or to identify areas for improvement.

5.23   In the Chief Inspector's report for 1999-2002, attention was directed to the need for the more effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards by senior and middle management in the majority of post-primary schools. Reference was also made to the insufficient use of quantitative data,

including benchmarking data. The evidence from inspection since 2002 points essentially to the same conclusion though, increasingly, senior management teams are implementing, or are beginning to implement, monitoring and evaluation strategies, and are paying greater attention to the analysis of external examination results and benchmarking data. Despite these welcome developments, in only a minority of post-primary schools are data analysis and benchmarking used in a sufficiently effective manner to influence classroom practice and to bring about improvements in the pupils' level of attainment.

5.24   The management of a minority of post-primary principals reflects significant weaknesses, or the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. This affects adversely teaching and learning, governance and staff morale, and leads to particular difficulties in these schools in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards, with the result (in some cases, and over an extended period of time) that under-achievement is tolerated and insufficient action is taken to effect improvement.

5.25   Similar problems are evident in FE and in training since 2002. Approximately half of the development planning inspected in FE lacks the necessary depth and rigour to lead to effective follow-up action. There continues to be a need for improved curricular leadership, for the more systematic monitoring of teaching, learning and standards, and for a much greater use of qualitative and quantitative indicators and data to influence classroom practice and improve standards. Substantially increased attention has been given to self-evaluation, but approximately half of self-evaluation reports are more descriptive than evaluative and are lacking in data analysis. While there is evidence of improvement since 2002, further improvements are needed in monitoring and evaluation, and in development and action planning arrangements.

5.26   In training, evidence from inspection demonstrates that, while the quality of leadership and management is good in a majority of the organisations inspected, a significant minority do not carry out effectively the self-evaluation of provision and outcomes. In these organisations, quality

assurance procedures remain poor, and qualitative and quantitative data is not used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses, and bring about improvements in the teaching and standards.

5.27   Evidence from the inspection of special schools, alternative education provision, and the youth sector also points to the need for improved monitoring and evaluation, data handling and analysis. In the special schools sector, management in a minority of the schools reflects significant weaknesses. In alternative education, there is a need for more systematic self-evaluation arrangements. In the youth sector, evidence from inspection points to the need for more rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation to assist planning and to assess the quality of provision.

The hard to help, attainment and gender: areas for attention

5.28   In a small number of schools, in spite of the implementation of behaviour management programmes and discipline initiatives, the behaviour of a minority of the pupils is disruptive. In the post-primary sector between 2000 and 2003, suspensions rose by 12%, though expulsions declined. The schools involved in the KS4 Flexibility Initiative report that access to vocational education opportunities has helped to improve the attendance, behaviour, and motivation of the pupils involved.

5.29   In the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002, reference was made to those young people whose needs are not well met by the traditional curriculum, and to gender differences in relation to attainment. The report also drew attention to a growing minority of pupils (mostly male) aged 14 to 16 who see little merit in conventional schooling, who have limited literacy and numeracy skills, whose behaviour is often deliberately disruptive, and who have gained little from attending school.

5.30   Research into disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland, particularly those most affected by years of civil unrest, has drawn attention (as did the Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002) to the challenges facing teachers, trainers and youth workers in areas where limited value is placed on education, and where debilitating social problems

affect adversely the efforts of teachers and others to make a difference. These problems will not be resolved easily. They have developed over time and will require time, targeted initiatives, and much educational and other expertise if they are to be resolved. The negative attitudes that some young people have of education and of training, and similar adverse parental and community perceptions, are major impediments which need to be remedied, if progress is to be made.

Gender

5.31   As noted in the post-primary section of this report, girls continue to outperform boys in GCSE and in GCE. There is also a need to raise the attainment of low and under-achieving pupils at 16, especially boys. One boy in every 14 leaves school without any qualifications; taking into account entitlement to free school meals as an indicator of socio-economic disadvantage, one boy in every 6 leaves without any qualifications, and the number continues to rise. Concerns about lower-attaining boys in Northern Ireland were also highlighted in 2000 and 2003, when samples of 15 year-old pupils took part in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In 2000, the main focus was on reading literacy and, while the mean score from Northern Ireland was significantly higher than the OECD country average, the pupils' scores were among the most dispersed. To a large extent, this was due to the poor performance of the lowest attaining 25% of boys. In 2003, the main focus was on mathematical literacy. While the mean score from Northern Ireland was also significantly higher than the OECD country average, due again to the generally poor performance of the lowest attaining boys, the results were more dispersed than those of Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Low/under achievement and social disadvantage

5.32   A distinction needs to be drawn between the strong overall performance of education and training in Northern Ireland, and the attainment of young people in those areas most affected by years of civil unrest, and where social disadvantage is at its most severe. Inspection and other evidence

demonstrate a close correlation between social disadvantage and low and under achievement. In 2002-2003, in the 25% of primary schools with the highest percentage of free school meal entitlement, the proportion of children not achieving the expected level (level 4) at KS2 was 37% in English and 33% in mathematics. While these figures are a significant improvement on the 48% and 41% who had not attained level 4 in English and mathematics in 1997-1998, they are still a considerable cause for concern.

5.33   Similar evidence of the link between low and under achievement and social disadvantage is apparent in the proportion of year 12 pupils who achieve no GCSE grades in the 25% of post-primary schools with the highest percentage of free school meal entitlement. In 2002-2003, 10.6% of year 12 pupils in these schools achieved no GCSE grades; in 1995-1996, the percentage was 10.9%. The proportion of young people who leave school with no qualifications reflects similar patterns. In 2002, the percentage of schools leavers with a free school meal entitlement leaving without any qualifications was 11.7% in comparison to 5.2% of all school leavers.

5.34   Low and under achievement affects schools not only in areas of high social disadvantage. GCSE outcomes in 2003 show that in almost 30% of non-selective schools in Northern Ireland, 30% of the pupils attained fewer than 5 or more GCSE grades at A* to C; in 13% of the schools, fewer than 20% of the pupils achieved similar outcomes. These patterns are the result of a combination of complex factors, including adverse societal and family attitudes to education, adverse peer pressure, the effects of open enrolment, and increasing demographic change. Their resolution will require systematic attention by management and by teachers to ensure that teaching and learning takes greater account of these and other related factors.

5.35   The needs of some young people who find conventional schooling problematic are addressed within AEP. Much has been achieved within AEP, but much remains to be done. There is a continuing need for more stable funding, better resources and accommodation. There is also a need for better liaison among AEP providers, and between AEP providers and the schools. This would enable the

schools to become more familiar with the strategies adopted within AEP and could help bring about improvements in the provision they make for marginalised and disaffected pupils.

5.36   The effects of social disadvantage, and of low and under achievement, are also a major constraint in FE and training, especially for those young people who leave school at 16 with little experience of educational success, limited expectations, and whose futures are threatened in an increasingly technological and skills-focused society by a lack of qualifications and basic competences. In training, many of these young people struggle to complete their courses, achieve a qualification, and gain employment. The Jobskills Access initiative, introduced by DEL to improve the retention rates and attitudes of trainees with few qualifications and/or behavioural difficulties, has brought about improvements in retention rates for these young people, though much remains to be done to help them complete their training successfully.

5.37   These complex problems are currently the focus of Ministerial and departmental concern. Their resolution will not be easy or rapid, and will require a significant measure of capacity building within local communities to enable education and training to be accepted as a route by which young people (and others) can achieve personal success, and sustainable employment. Their successful resolution will also require from senior management and staff in schools, FE, and the training sector, a more systematic response to low and under achievement, and to the related problems of poor attendance and behaviour, unduly limited expectations, and disaffection.

Life in a divided and increasingly pluralist society: the challenge for education

5.38   Society in Northern Ireland continues to change. While there are many welcome examples of positive change and of optimism, there are also unresolved problems that represent an ongoing challenge to education. Sectarianism remains a major threat. Recent research evidence, for example, has highlighted how even very young children adapt readily to sectarian symbolism and prejudice. Increases in racial harassment, hostile

attitudes to migrant workers, and increases in homophobic attacks, have created difficulties in some parts of Northern Ireland. Reported racial incidents have risen rapidly since 1999, and have been recorded at a higher rate per 1000 of the population than in England and Wales.

5.39   Since 1987, DE has implemented the Schools Community Relations Programme to help promote cross-community contact and to assist young people to develop an understanding of, and respect for, difference. The Programme has contributed much of value, but concerns about its overall effectiveness have been highlighted in research commissioned by DE. This research noted the limited impact of funded cross-community contact work within the schools sector; for example, while 53% of primary schools have had an involvement with the Programme, only 21% of the children in those schools have participated. The situation is even bleaker in the post-primary sector; 50% of the schools have taken part in the Programme, but only 3% of the pupils have been involved.

5.40   It is also important to acknowledge that, in addition to the work undertaken by the Schools Community Relations Programme, much has been achieved by those seeking to promote cross-community understanding. The piloting of CCEA's Citizenship Education programme involves a large number of schools in work that has the potential to influence positively the attitudes of young people to diversity and human rights. In the pre-school sector, cross-community contact is encouraged to assist children and their parents to arrive at a greater understanding of Northern Ireland's different communities. Primary and post-primary schools - with the assistance of ELB officers and others - continue to promote cross-community projects. In the integrated sector, the development of the anti-bias curriculum has had an influential and positive effect. The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust, and the Future Voices project, have also improved inter-community understanding and respect for difference. In FE, work is ongoing to develop a better understanding of cultural diversity, difference, and social justice. In the Youth sector, and often in challenging interface areas, work continues to raise cross-community awareness, to highlight issues of equity, diversity and

interdependence, and to combat intolerance and prejudice. In Teacher Education, students from Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College are participating in an inter-college programme to promote diversity and mutual understanding.

5.41   Despite these positive developments, significant challenges remain. Research and other evidence point to continuing anxieties in schools and colleges about exploring controversial issues relating to division, conflict and sectarianism, and to concerns about opposition from parents and others to what might be perceived as the undermining of community traditions and values. The teaching strategies and resources used to explore more sensitive matters relating to Northern Ireland need the depth necessary to give young people a good understanding of the factors involved, should not focus only on negative issues, such as sectarianism, and should highlight also the more positive traditions, culture and history of the two main communities in Northern Ireland.

5.42   Above all, there remains the need for educationalists to help young people acquire a greater awareness of the importance of opposing bigotry, racism, and other damaging manifestations of intolerance, and to assist them to develop in Northern Ireland a society as free as possible from the tensions and prejudices of the past.

5.43   None of this will be attained easily. There are well-recognised limits to what education can accomplish when opposed by more powerful influences involving community, family, and peer pressure. In 2003, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister issued A Shared Future which drew attention to the "significant number of Catholics and Protestants who, whilst bearing no ill-will, are not yet comfortable with the greater integration of the two communities."

5.44   For many years, the educational and training sector in Northern Ireland provided young people with a much-needed respite from the violence and prejudice of the streets. It will be important that those involved with education, training, and youth work consider again how best they can help young people to acquire the tolerance and understanding necessary to help them contribute positively to life in

a divided and increasingly multi-cultural Northern Ireland, even at a time when other major educational changes and curricular priorities compete for their attention. Much remains to be done.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 There is much in this report that affirms and acknowledges the quality of education, training and youth work in Northern Ireland, and the standards attained. That this is so, is testimony to the hard work, expertise, professionalism, and commitment of those who teach and otherwise serve the interests of our children, pupils, young people, and their parents.

6.2 It is clear from inspection and other evidence that impressively high levels of attainment are reached by many of our young people, and especially by the very able. It is important, however, that the needs of all are met in ways that permit them to reach the highest standards of which they are capable, and that they have every opportunity to develop those attitudes and qualities that they will need in the future. To achieve this important goal, greater attention needs to be paid to those who require help with their learning, and to those young people, particularly – but not only - boys and young men, who gain little from their years of compulsory schooling and from post-16 education and training. This continuum of need challenges us all.

6.3 In the Commentary, attention was drawn to the achievements of education, training, and youth work in Northern Ireland, and to the importance of responding positively in times of change, challenge and opportunity. As so often happens, the system is faced with new and substantial challenges, and opportunities, especially in primary and post-primary education, in special education, and for those aged 16 to 19 and beyond. No less challenging will be the implications arising from the Review of Public Administration Consultation Document issued in March 2005. In addressing these matters, there is a need to maintain, and improve further, existing standards, and address other issues, including assisting young people here to adapt to the challenges of an increasingly technological and pluralist society.

6.4 The Inspectorate has a role to play in this period of challenge and opportunity. It will be important that the link between inspection and improvement is maintained and developed further; that the findings of inspection continue to influence Government and departmental policy; that the Inspectorate maintains an independent voice and its commitment to the interests of all learners, adapts to changed and changing circumstances, and develops further its productive relationship with those whose work is inspected. Ultimately, the Inspectorate needs to continue to make a difference by helping to improve the nature and quality of the education and training available to all of the young people in Northern Ireland. To do less would be to do a disservice to future generations of learners.

Annexes

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Annex 1

INSPECTIONS 2002-2004

Year of Inspection	2002/2003	2003/2004
Pre-School Inspections	82	92
Primary Inspections, including Preparatory Schools	61	72
Post-Primary Inspections	18	17
Special School Inspections	4	7
Further Education Inspections	2	4
Training Organisation Inspections	16	26
Youth Organisation Inspections	6	10
Alternative Education Inspections	6	4
Follow-up Inspections (all sectors)	106	104
Surveys: institutions visited (all sectors)	204	316
TOTAL	**505**	**652**

Annex 2

SURVEYS 2002-2004

Survey	Phases Involved	Visits
2002-2003		
Provision in Geography and History in a Sample of Primary Schools in Northern Ireland	Primary	30
Report of a Survey of Science Year	Primary Post-Primary Special Community Groups	10 5 1 2
Modern Languages: Inspection and Improvement	Post-Primary	40 over 3 years
Report of a Survey into Road and Farm Safety Education in Primary and Post-Primary Schools	Primary Post-Primary	10 10
Report of a Survey – The Provision of the Pilot Programme of Foundation Degrees in Seven Colleges of Further and Higher Education	FE	7
Survey on the Implementation of Curriculum 2000 (AVCE)	FE Post-Primary	8 7
Report on A Survey of the Music Services provided by the Education and Library Boards	Primary Post-Primary	36 28
Report of a Survey of the Pilot Programme of Small to Medium Sized Enterprises in Six Colleges of Further and Higher Education	FE	6
Health Education in Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland	Post-Primary	24
TOTAL		**224**
2003-2004		
Inclusion	Primary Post-Primary	23 23
Essential Skills	Tutor Training Centres FE Colleges Community Centres New Deal Providers Jobskills Providers	3 6 6 12 6
Enriched Curriculum Pilot	Primary	29
The Management of Teacher Substitution in Northern Ireland	Pre-School; Primary; Post-Primary; Special	108
Severe and Challenging Behaviour	Special	22
Science in FE Colleges	FE	6
Worktrack	Training	5
Provision for Leavers in MLD Schools	Special	9
Key Skills in Jobskills	Training	16
Reception	Primary	31
Inspection, Self-Evaluation, and Improvement	Primary Post-Primary	2 10
ILT	FE Colleges	17
The Teaching and Learning of German in Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland	Post-Primary	18
TOTAL		**352**

Annex 3

KEY STAGE ASSESSMENTS[1] 1998/1999 - 2002/2003

		1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02[2]	2002/03
		% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving
Key Stage One	**Level 2 or above**					
	English	93.9	94.5	94.8	94.6	94.7
	Mathematics	94.0	94.8	95.0	94.9	95.2
	Level 3 or above					
	English	32.6	33.4	35.5	36.5	38.1
	Mathematics	36.8	39.1	42.4	42.8	45.1
Key Stage Two	**Level 4 or above**					
	English	69.0	71.5	72.8	73.9	75.6
	Mathematics	73.9	75.4	75.7	77.0	78.2
	Level 5 or above					
	English	17.5	18.6	19.8	20.8	22.1
	Mathematics	34.9	37.0	37.7	38.1	39.8
Key Stage Three[3]	**Level 5 or above**					
	English	67.7	68.7	71.8	72.9	72.2
	Mathematics	70.1	67.0	68.9	73.1	70.7
	Science	65.2	66.7	67.2	67.9	68.3
	Level 6 or above					
	English	41.9	43.9	45.5	47.5	46.5
	Mathematics	45.9	46.4	46.4	46.6	46.5
	Science	39.1	40.4	41.1	40.3	41.8

1   Excludes Special and Independent schools.

2   Due to industrial action, Key Stage 1 and 2 assessment results for 2001-2002 are incomplete. Approximately 10% of schools did not submit Key Stage 1 results and 9% of schools did not submit Key Stage 2 results.

3   Data for Key Stage 3 is based on Key Stage 3 Tests.

Annex 4

KEY STAGE 3 RESULTS BY SCHOOL TYPE: 1998/1999–2002/2003

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
	% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving	% Achieving
Selective					
Level 5 or above					
English	97	98	98	98	97
Mathematics	99	99	98	99	98
Level 6 or above					
English	82	85	87	88	89
Mathematics	92	91	91	91	92
Non-Selective					
Level 5 or above					
English	52	53	58	60	58
Mathematics	55	50	53	60	56
Level 6 or above					
English	21	22	24	26	23
Mathematics	22	23	23	23	22

Results are based on key stage tests.

Annex 5

GCSE AND GCE COMPARISONS WITH ENGLAND AND WALES: 1993/1994 – 2002/2003

Performance Indicator [1,2]		1993/ 94	1994/ 95	1995/ 96	1996/ 97[5]	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 00[6]	2000/ 01[6]	2001/ 02[7,8]	2002/ 03[7,8]
% achieving 2+ 'A' Levels A-E[3]	NI	87	87	90	91	92	92	93	93	95	95
	England	81	77	79	81	81	81	81	82	83	83
	Wales	N/A	N/A	87	89	90	91	92	93	94	94
% achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C[4]	NI	49	51	52	54	55	56	57	57	59	59
	England	43	44	45	45	46	48	49	50	52	53
	Wales	39	41	42	44	46	48	49	50	50	51
% achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-G[4]	NI	82	84	84	85	87	87	87	87	87	87
	England	86	86	86	86	88	88	89	89	89	89
	Wales	79	79	79	80	82	83	85	85	85	85
% achieving no GCSEs[4]	NI	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
	England	8	8	8	8	7	6	6	5	5	5
	Wales	10	11	11	10	9	8	8	8	8	7

1   Sources: DE, DfES, National Assembly for Wales.

2   Excludes special and independent schools in Northern Ireland.

3   'A' level figures are expressed as a percentage of pupils in the final year of an 'A' level course in Northern Ireland; as a percentage of all 17 year olds entered for at least one A or AS level by the end of the academic year in England; and as a percentage of all candidates entered for 2 or more A levels in Wales.

4   GCSE figures are expressed as a percentage of pupils in year 12 in Northern Ireland, and as a percentage of 15 year olds in England and Wales. The 2000/01 Northern Ireland figure for the percentage achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-G has been revised.

5   From 1996/97 GCSE figures include GNVQ Part 1 Qualifications.

6   A level Figures for 1999/00 and 2000/01 for Northern Ireland are from the University of Bath GCE Database.

7   A level Figures from 2001/02 for Northern Ireland are taken from the Summary of Annual Examination Results.

8   A level Figures from 2001/02 for Northern Ireland, England and Wales include Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (VCEs). Also, included in this section are those pupils aged 17 in Wales and in Year 14 in Northern Ireland who obtained AS levels and who did not sit the A2 modules of these subjects. In this respect 2 AS levels are equivalent to 1 A level.

Annex 6

PARTICIPATION IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION BY 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Males	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01[1]	01/02	02/03	03/04
Schools	9,153	9,150	9,389	9,471	9,820	10,436	11,022
FE Colleges							
Mainstream Courses	5,014	4,624	4,624	4,371	4,144	4,061	4,939
Jobskills Courses	2,791	2,599	2,777	3,946	4,115	4,099	3,167
All FE Courses	7,805	7,223	7,401	8,317	8,259	8,160	8,106
Total in full-time education	16,958	16,373	16,790	17,788	18,079	18,596	19,128
Population	27,554	26,731	26,345	26,835	27,234	27,755	27,822
Participation rate	61.5%	61.3%	63.7%	66.3%	66.4%	67.0%	68.8%
Female	**97/98**	**98/99**	**99/00**	**00/011**	**01/02**	**02/03**	**03/04**
Schools	12,847	12,751	12,904	13,428	13,886	14,433	15,086
FE Colleges							
Mainstream Courses	6,428	6,094	6,239	5,912	5,782	5,507	5,524
Jobskills Courses	802	813	751	616	648	592	620
All FE Courses	7,230	6,907	6,990	6,528	6,430	6,099	6,144
Total in full-time education	20,077	19,658	19,894	19,956	20,316	20,532	21,230
Population	26,412	25,856	25,341	25,608	25,773	26,620	26,524
Participation rate	76.0%	76.0%	78.5%	77.9%	78.8%	77.1%	80.0%
Male & Female	**97/98**	**98/99**	**99/00**	**00/011**	**01/02**	**02/03**	**03/04**
Schools	22,000	21,901	22,293	22,899	23,706	24,869	26,108
FE Colleges							
Mainstream Courses	11,442	10,718	10,863	10,283	9,926	9,568	10,463
Jobskills Courses	3,593	3,412	3,528	4,562	4,763	4,691	3,787
All FE Courses	15,035	14,130	14,391	14,845	14,689	14,259	14,250
Total in full-time education	37,035	36,031	36,684	37,744	38,395	39,128	40,358
Population	53,966	52,587	51,686	52,443	53,007	54,375	54,346
Participation rate	68.6%	68.5%	71.0%	72.0%	72.4%	72.0%	74.3%

Source: DE Schools Census, DEL FESR
& NISRA Population Estimates

1   *Figures from 2000/01 onwards include Jobskills trainees in Government Training Centres, which came under the remit of FE in that year. The net effect of this was to increase the participation rate. [The magnitude of this increase in 2000/01 was two percentage points.]*

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